COVID19 – STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Standard Operating Procedure "SOP" is to ensure a safe working environment for all employees and to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 "OHSA" requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of its employees. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees.

2. SCOPE

This SOP is applicable to all employees, visitors and sub-contractors.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The organisation's 16.1 (CEO) and 16.2 (Head of School), COVID-19 Compliance Officer and COVID Committee appointees must ensure that this document is implemented as far as reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of all employees and visitors. Due to the nature of COVID-19, it is also important that all employees assume a level of responsibility to manage and contain the spread of the virus.

4. REFERENCES

- National Institute for Communicable Diseases "NICD"
- World Health Organisation "WHO"
- The National Institute for Occupational Health
- The National Health Laboratory Services
- The Department of Employment and Labour

5. DEFINITON

COVID-19 - a mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a coronavirus (Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 of the genus Betacoronavirus), is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets), and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure. Derived for SARS-CoV-2.

6. ACTIVITIES

6.1 Visitors to the School

- Visitors to the School are required to complete the Visitor Screening Questionnaire on entry to the school and wear a cloth face mask.
- All entry points must be equipped with hand sanitisers (at least 70% alcohol)
- If meetings take place, all delegates are to be seated at least one and a half metres apart.

- The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month. This will assist healthcare authorities in tracing who has been exposed to the virus if a participant becomes ill with COVID-19 after the meeting.
- All participants must be informed by the School should any of the participants of a meeting become ill with COVID-19 at a later stage.

6.2 Routine Cleaning Activities

The period that COVID-19 can survive on objects is dependent on certain criteria which is difficult to predict given that not all working environments are the same. A study by the WHO determined that the COVID-19 could remain infectious for between two hours and nine days on certain surfaces. All work surfaces and equipment should be disinfected before work begins, regularly during the working period and after work ends. All areas such as toilets, common areas, door handles, shared electronic equipment should be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Further to this:

- Provide resources and a work environment that promotes personal hygiene. For example, no-touch refuse bins, hand soap, alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 70 percent alcohol, disinfectants, and disposable towels for employees, students and visitors to clean their hands and their work surfaces. Fabric towelling for drying hands is prohibited.
- Promote regular hand washing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Display handwashing signs in restrooms.
- Every machine/equipment and work area should be equipped with a sanitiser and must be cleaned before use.
- Increase cleaning schedule to deal with increased frequency of wiping down all surface areas.

6.2.1 How to Clean and Disinfect
Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common household disinfectants should be effective.
  - ⬜ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time etc.

□ Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiry date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when correctly diluted.

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

● For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floors, rugs and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces.
   After cleaning:

□ If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting and then dry items completely.

Electronics

● For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls and ATM machines, remove visible contamination if present.
   □ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
   □ Consider the use of wipeable covers for electronics.
   □ If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Linens, Clothing and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

● In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
● Wash items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely. Dirty

laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to **guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.**

6.3 Company Start Up (Post Lockdown)

- A detailed risk assessment of the school must be established prior to any work being conducted.
- The risk assessment must be communicated to all staff.
- All employees to be trained on COVID-19.
- Re-induction with all staff must include the COVID-19 risk assessment, safe operating procedure, procedure to deal with sick employees and required PPE.
- A deep clean must be done on the premises as per Section 6.2 above.
- A pre-inspection to be conducted prior to the operation of any machinery and equipment.
- A comprehensive cleaning schedule must be developed to ensure routine cleaning is conducted. This schedule should be monitored on a daily basis.
- Schools will issue each staff member with at least two cloth face masks, which will comply with the requirement set out in the Guidelines issued by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, for the employee to wear while at work and while commuting to and from work;
- The number and replaceability of cloth masks that must be provided to an employee or required of other workers will be determined in accordance with any sectoral guideline and in the light of the employee or worker's conditions of work, in particular, where these may result in the mask becoming wet or soiled.
- Employees will be informed, trained and instructed as to the correct use of cloth masks and the maintenance thereof.
- An employer must make appropriate arrangements with staff and students to take responsibility for the washing, drying and ironing of cloth masks.
- Where respirators are used, the employer must ensure that every employee has their own respirator. The employer must provide each employee with disinfectant wipes to clean their respirators after use and a hygienic place (airtight container) must be provided for the respirators to be stored. Respirators are not allowed to be taken home.

- Where dust masks are used, the employer must ensure that they are readily available for use. The employer must ensure that no dust mask is used twice and that they are disposed of in a safe manner.
- Bulk Storage of sanitiser shall follow normal procedure as stated below:

    - Containers are closed
    - Good housekeeping maintained
    - Storage area to be well ventilated
    - If the chemical is stored in a chemical store, can the bund capacity contain the addition of the new chemical
    - Referral must be made to the Material Safety Data Sheets in terms of the safe handling and storage of bulk sanitiser.

- Employer to ensure that there is a process to identify and deal with employees who are ill at work. This may include a daily walkthrough to observe if any employee appears to be sick.

6.4 Daily Activities

- Monitor the temperatures of all employees prior to their gaining entry onto the premises.
- Meetings to be conducted telephonically or via video conferencing where possible.
- Physical distancing to be encouraged across the organisation.
- Employees are to be encouraged to stay at home if not well and to report to their medical practitioners if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. They must inform their Head / School Nurse of COVID-19 Compliance Officer if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms.

6.5 Signage and posters

It is important that the school has visible signs and posters around the workplace to remind employees, students and visitors about the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are needed to limit its spread.

Typical signs and posters may include:

- Wearing of cloth masks before entering the premises
- Handwashing techniques
- Physical distancing
- Coughing and sneezing etiquette
- General COVID-19 awareness
- General hygiene principles

6.6 Employees diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19

If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they should not be permitted to return to work until cleared to do so by a medical practitioner. Should an employee be ill at work with suspected COVID-19 symptoms then:

a) Isolate the sick employee and issue them with a FFP1 mask.
b) Inform the national COVID-19 hotline (0800 029 999) and follow the advice of health officials.
c) Arrange for the worker to be transported in a manner that does not place other workers or members of the public at risk for a medical examination or testing.
d) Ensure the staff member is tested at a medical facility for COVID-19.
e) Inform the Department of Health and the Department of Employment and Labour, as per Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020, when an employee had been tested and found positive for COVID-19.
f) Clean the area where the person was working and all places they have been. This may mean evacuating those areas.
g) Identify who at the workplace had close contact with the infected person. Refer those workers who may be at risk for screening and take any other appropriate measures to prevent possible transmission; ensure that the worker is tested or referred to an identified testing site, as per required by Government Notice NO. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/2002): Covid-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces COVID-19 (C19 OHS).
h) Clean the area where the close contact people were working and all common areas they have been. This may mean evacuating those areas.
i) Review risk management controls relating to COVID-19 and review whether work may need to change. Keep employees up to date with relevant information.

j) Obtain a medical certificate of fitness / negative test for COVID-19 certificate after 14 days of recovered staff member and re-induct on health and safety COVID-19 protocols, before work can commence.

If the employee is not at work when he / she is diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19, then follow steps e, f, g, h and i above

6.7 COIDA Claims

The Compensation Commissioner has issued the Notice on Compensation for Occupationally Acquired Novel Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) to clarify the position of the Compensation Fund with regard to occupationally acquired COVID-19. The notice applies only to COVID-19 acquired by employees arising out of, and in the course of, the employees' employment through exposure to confirmed cases in the workplace or after an official work trip to a high-risk country or area.

To qualify for benefits from the Compensation Fund, the following criteria must be met:
- The diagnosis must be as a result of occupational exposure to a known source of COVID-19;
- The COVID-19 must be diagnosed as per the World Health Organisation guidelines;
- The COVID-19 diagnosis must be linked to an approved official trip and travel history to high risk areas or countries on a work assignment or linked to a presumed high-risk work environment where transmission of COVID-19 is inherently prevalent; and
- A chronological sequence must exist between the work exposure and the development of COVID-19 symptoms.

The Compensation Fund will compensate qualifying employees who are temporarily disabled from working as a result of COVID-19 for a period of up to 30 days from the date of diagnosis. The Compensation Fund will not pay for cases that have not been diagnosed and where self-quarantine is recommended by a registered Medical Practitioner, the employer is liable for the employee's remuneration for the days of absence.

Where an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, such employee will be provided with medical aid for a period of up to 30 days from the date of diagnosis. If an employee dies

as a result of complications from COVID-19, the Compensation Fund shall pay out reasonable burial expenses and widow and dependent's pensions, where applicable.

In essence, the notice confirms that COVID-19 cases which arise out of, and in the course of, an employee's employment will be regarded as occupational diseases for purposes of COIDA.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

With COVID-19, it may not be possible to eliminate the hazard completely and accordingly the most effective control measures are (listed from most effective to least effective): engineering controls, administrative controls, safe work practices (a type of administrative control), and PPE.
There are advantages and disadvantages to each type of control measure when considering the ease of implementation, effectiveness and cost. In addition to the types of workplace controls discussed below, the NICD provides fact sheets that guide specific workplaces (employers and employees) in relation to recommended infection prevention strategies to implement in workplaces.

If the company has more than 500 employees, then it is required that a record of the COVID-19 risk assessment, together with a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of its employees from COVID-19, is submitted to the company's health and safety committee and the Department of Employment and Labour.

7.1 Engineering Controls

Engineering controls involve isolating employees from work-related hazards. In workplaces where they are appropriate, these types of controls reduce exposure to hazards without relying solely on employee behaviour and can be the most cost-effective solution to implement.

Engineering controls for COVID-19 include:

- Installing high-efficiency air filters (not to be relied on as the most appropriate in isolation of other controls).
- Increasing ventilation rates in the work environment.
- Installing physical barriers such as face shields.
- Specialized negative pressure ventilation in some settings (e.g. airborne infection isolation rooms in healthcare settings and autopsy rooms in mortuary settings).

7.2 Administrative Controls

Administrative controls require action by the employee and employer. Typically, administrative controls are changes in work policy or procedures to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard. Examples of administrative controls for COVID-19 include:
- Encouraging sick employees to stay at home.
- Minimizing contact among employees, clients, and customers by replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual communications e.g. conference calls, Skype, etc.
- Minimizing the number of employees on site at any given time e.g. rotation or shift work.
- Discontinuing nonessential local and international travel. Regularly check travel advice from the Department of Health at: www.health.gov.za
- Developing emergency communications plans, including a task team for answering employees' concerns and internet-based communications, if feasible.
- Providing employees with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviours (e.g. cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- Training employees who need to use protective clothing and equipment on how to put it on, use/wear it and take it off correctly in the context of their current and potential duties. Training material should be easy to understand and available in the appropriate language and literacy level for all employees.

8. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

While engineering and administrative controls are considered more effective in minimizing exposure to COVID-19, PPE may also be needed to prevent certain exposures. While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other prevention strategies.

Examples of PPE include:
- gloves
- goggles
- face shields
- face masks
- gowns
- aprons
- coats
- overalls
- hair and shoe cover and respiratory protection, when appropriate.

During an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, recommendations for PPE specific to occupations or job tasks may change depending on geographic location; updated risk assessments for employees and information on PPE effectiveness in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Employers should check the NICD website regularly for updates about recommended PPE.

All types of PPE must be:

- selected based upon the hazard to the employee.
- properly fitted (e.g., respirators).
- consistently and properly worn when required.
- regularly inspected, maintained and replaced, as necessary.
- properly removed, cleaned and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment

Employers are obligated to provide their workers with the PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their duties. The types of PPE required during a COVID-19 outbreak will be based on the risk of being infected with COVID-19 while working and job tasks that may lead to exposure. Based on most recent Government recommendations, face masks should be worn by the general public and employees.

9. IMPLEMENTING WORKPLACE CONTROLS

The legislation governing workplaces in relation to COVID–19 is the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Act 85 of 1993, as amended, read with the Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations. Section 8 (1) of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, Act 85 of 1993, as amended, requires the employer to provide and maintain as far as is reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees.

Specifically, Section 8(2)(b) requires steps that are reasonably practicable to eliminate or mitigate any hazard or potential hazard before resorting to PPE. However, in the case of COVID–19, a combination of controls is required, although the main principle is to follow the hierarchy of controls. However, before the implementation of control measures, current risk assessments need to be reviewed and updated, taking into account the new hazards posed by exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. This is in accordance with Section 8 (2) (d) of the OHS Act.

10. MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT

- Due to the nature of COVID-19, this document will be seen as a living document as the information it contains may change due to the progression of the COVID-19 virus.