



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Guidelines for Schools on Maintaining Hygiene during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Acronyms

ACRONYMS

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoH	Department of Health
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSD	Department of Social Development
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
NDoH	National Department of Health
NICD	National Institute for Communicable Diseases
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
PED(s)	Provincial Education Department(s)
PHEIC	Public Health Emergency of International Concern
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2
SBST(s)	School-Based Support Team(s)
SMT(s)	School Management Team(s)
SOP(s)	Standard Operating Procedure(s)
TB	Tuberculosis
WHO	World Health Organization

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

Hygiene interventions play an important role in reducing and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and in developing the necessary knowledge to positively impact attitudes of personal and community hygiene practices.

These guidelines provide recommendations on hygiene measures to be implemented in the school environment, in order to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID 19. These measures include essential cleaning and disinfection, the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), social distancing and hand hygiene practices.

School hygiene measures should include education and awareness of educators, learners and school support on COVID-19, the spread of the virus, symptoms and personal protective measures. Importantly, these hygiene practices should continue outside of the home in households and in learner transport in order to keep the school community safe.

A. UNDERSTANDING COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. Thus, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy. More information on COVID-19 is available from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases www.nicd.ac.za; the Department of Health www.health.gov.za and the Department of Basic Education www.education.gov.za .

Schools, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure learners and educators have a safe and healthy learning and working environment.

How is the corona virus spread?

COVID-19 is spread by fluid droplets when coughing, sneezing or shouting. It can be spread by a person who has been infected **before they have symptoms**, during illness and for a short period of time after they feel better. Researchers estimate that around 44% of infections are passed-on by people who are not showing any symptoms. Virus particles can survive in the air for a short period of time and can remain on hard surfaces such as plastic or steel for a few days, if not removed with regular cleaning. COVID-19 is spread by contaminated hands touching the hands of others or touching things such as money, credit cards, door handles and counters. When you then touch your eyes, nose and mouth after you have touched other people's hands and things with COVID-19 on it, then you can get infected.

What are the symptoms of COVID 19?

Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include:

- COUGH**
Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19
- FEVER**
Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH**

Protect yourself and other from the disease

#coronavirusupdate # COVID-2019

B. STANDARD PRECAUTIONS OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

A safe environment can be achieved through elimination of infectious particles in the air and on surfaces by **always adhering to the Golden Rules:**

1. **Prevent direct contact with persons who are sick** – encourage educators, learners and staff to stay at home when feeling sick.
2. **Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)** – use protective face masks at all times.
3. **Environmental cleaning and disinfection** - reduce the risk of micro-organisms in the environment by cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, hand rails, desks, tables, windows, etc. hourly or less frequently depending on the circumstances.

An effective disinfectant is diluted bleach disinfectant (20 ml bleach per litre of clean water).

4. **Social distancing** - Keep a distance of at least 1.5 meters between persons in any circumstance, avoiding gatherings and contact activities outside of the classroom such as extra mural activities, contact sport, assemblies, hall gatherings and queuing at tuck-shops or for school feeding programme meals.
5. **Hand hygiene - Wash hands frequently with soap and water** for 20 seconds, especially after using the toilet, touching food and if hands are visibly soiled/dirty.
6. **Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser regularly**, especially after contact with any person or after contact with frequently touched surfaces i.e. phones, door handles etc.
7. **Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose** with unwashed/un-sanitised hands.
8. **Limit airborne transmission-** allow adequate cross ventilation in classrooms and office buildings. Limit visitors and the number of people that enter the school, office or classroom. Parents should enter the school only if absolutely necessary.
9. **Practice cough and sneeze etiquette** – cough in the fold of the bent elbow and sneeze in a tissue which should be discarded safely in a refuse bin with a lid. Wash hands immediately thereafter.

C. RISK REDUCTION METHODS FOR SCHOOLS

- a) Every person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) that enters or leaves a school must wash their hands or sanitise them at the entrance/gate utilising hand hygiene stations equipped with soap (bar or liquid) and water or sanitise with a hand sanitiser with at least 60 % alcohol base.
- b) Pens and pencils must not be shared amongst learners or teachers.
- c) There should be no sharing of food or eating utensils.
- d) Social distancing must be adhered to at all times.
- e) Classrooms must be well ventilated.
- f) Classrooms must be cleaned at least twice a day with a disinfectant.
- g) Every person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) that enters a school should have their temperature assessed with a Digital Thermometer scanner as follows:
 - Remove the protective scanner cap
 - Switch it on and wait for '00' reading
 - Scan the forehead
 - A reading of 37.5 and above indicates a possible fever and should be referred for further investigation, as per the Standard Operation Procedures for the Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 in Schools and School Communities- hereafter referred to as the "SOPs"),
 - *Visitors and staff with a fever are not permitted on the school grounds.*
 - Learners with a temperature of more than 37.5 must to be kept separate from others/isolated in the dedicated isolation facilities, equipped with a mask and the parents/caregivers notified to collect the child for further investigation by a health professional. The principal or his/her designate must contact the school health contact person or the nearest public primary healthcare facility. **The health facility must be informed if COVID-19 infection is suspected so that they can make the necessary arrangements to receive and manage the patient safely to prevent contamination.**

D. RISK REDUCTION METHODS FOR CLASSROOMS & OFFICES

Each classroom and office must have access to the following:

- a) A portable handwashing station (avoid common bowls – use tippy taps), handwashing soap (bar or liquid) or hand sanitizer with at least 60 % alcohol base.

Frequent hand hygiene must be part of the routine of everyday life in a school or office. Every person that enters a classroom must wash their hands with soap and water or sanitise their hands, and again when leaving the classroom.

- b) A litter bin with a lid, lined with a bin liner in which all tissues, paper towels and possible contaminated waste must be discarded.
- c) Paper towels to dry hands or wipe surfaces. Used paper towels must be discarded safely in the litter bin with a lid.
- d) Protective face masks¹ (cloth masks) and/or visors must be worn at all times in classrooms.

Note:

*** N95 masks are reserved for use by health official that are treating or looking after COVID-19 patients.**

***Do not use hand sanitiser after using the toilet – wash hands with soap.**

E. RISK REDUCTION METHODS FOR TOILETS/BATHROOMS

Each toilet/bathroom must have the following:

- a) A handwashing station and handwashing soap (bar or liquid) within 5m of the toilet for handwashing after using the toilet.
- b) Paper towels to dry hands, or air dry the hands. Used paper towels must be discarded safely in the litter bin with a lid. *Do not use a common hand towel.*
- c) A litter bin with a lid, lined with a bin liner in which all tissues, paper towels and possible contaminated waste must be discarded.
- d) Surfaces that are regularly touched, e.g. taps, doorknobs and toilet handles must be wiped down hourly with 20 ml bleach per liter water or disinfectant wipes.
- e) Daily cleaning of all surfaces at least twice a day with a disinfectant cleaner. Recommend sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) or Bleach mixture (250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water).

¹ Only effective if used with regular handwashing. Cloth masks to be washed and ironed daily

F. HAND HYGIENE PRACTICES

a) When to wash hands

- Wash your hands **after visiting the toilet**;
- Wash your hands **before handling food or eating**;
- Wash your hands **after taking care of sick people**;
- Wash your hands **after touching surfaces**;
- Wash your hands **after sneezing or coughing**.

b) How to wash hands

How to wash your hands with soap and water

1. Wet hands and apply soap
 2. Rub palms of hands together
 3. Rub in between the fingers, back of hands and wrist
 4. Clean underneath the nails
 5. Rinse hands with clean running water
 6. Dry with clean paper towel or shake hands in the air to dry
- Do not use a cloth or share a paper towel to wipe



c) How to sanitise hands

1. Apply the hand sanitiser to the palm of one hand (size of a R1/r R2 coin)
2. Rub your hands together

3. Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and in between fingers for at least 20 seconds until your hands are dry



A Note on alcohol-based hand sanitisers

- *If you are not near a handwashing station and soap, use a hand sanitiser to clean your hands.*
- *Do not use a sanitiser after using the toilet and if your hands are visibly soiled - wash hands with soap and water.*
- *Sanitisers should have alcohol content of at least 60% for maximum protection. No more than 60% is required.*
- *Use a hand sanitiser only on dry hands.*
- *If using gloves, sanitise hands before and after use (of the gloves).*
- *Do not use a sanitiser on gloves.*
- *Do not sanitise and use water at the same time – it is harsh for your skin.*

G. FOOD PREPARATION AREAS (SCHOOLS WITH NSNP)

In addition to the general guidelines for schools, food storage and preparation areas for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) must institute additional hygiene measures to ensure food safety and to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additional measures include the following:

- Volunteer Food Handlers must wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food.
- Head gear, face masks and disposable plastic aprons must be worn to prevent droplet transmission. Closed shoes should be worn.
- All surfaces must be cleaned daily with Disinfectant cleaner (recommend sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) **or** Bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water).
- Surfaces must be cleaned with at least 70% ethyl alcohol cleaner for wiping down in-between daily cleaning.
- Learners should eat their meals in the classrooms under the supervision of an educators.
- Staggered serving times should be considered to prevent queuing in the kitchen.

H. LEARNER TRANSPORT

All commuter transport services including passenger bus services, taxi services, and private cars transporting learners to school must adhere to the Regulations issued in terms of Disaster Management Act 2002 (Act no 57 of 2002) and all directives set out in the schedule to address and contain the spread of COVID-19 including **Loading capacity of learner transport: Regulation 11C as amended by the substitution Regulation by a; b and c as below:**

- (a) All minibuses must reduce seating capacity to mitigate the spread of the virus;
- (b) Bus services, taxi services and e- hailing services shall not carry more than 50% of the licensed capacity; and

(c) Private vehicles shall not carry more than 60% of the licensed capacity, and that all directions in respect of hygienic conditions and the limitation of exposure of persons to COVID -19, are adhered to.

Provision of improved access and hygiene, disinfection control in learner transport

- All operators of learner transport facilities must on regular intervals provide adequate sanitisers or other hygiene dispenser for washing of hands for learners.
- Operators must ensure that all learner transport vehicles are clean and tidy.
- All operators must ensure that public transport vehicles are disinfected before picking up and after dropping off learners.
- Operators must ensure that all learner transport vehicle door and window handles, armrests and handrails are sanitised before picking up and dropping off learners.
- All drivers and learners must wear a mask.
- Learners must sanitise hands on embarking and disembarking of transport at all times. The sanitisers used to sanitise all learner transport vehicles must have a minimum of 60% alcohol content.
- All learner transport operators must provide disinfection information materials and procedures. Operators must ensure that all learner transport vehicles are clean and tidy.

I. CONSISTENT AVAILABILITY OF HYGIENE PRODUCTS

The installation, supervision, and regular re-filling of hygiene products, stock and equipment is the responsibility of the School Principal/Head of the institution, delegated to the factotum/cleaners.

The School Principals must ensure:

- a. The rapid procurement and delivery of adequate quantities of products in the ***Basic and Essential Hygiene and Sanitation Package for Each School*** by timely ordering and filling-up stock.
- b. Hand hygiene training and reminders to learners, including refreshers as is necessary.

- c. Communication to parents about the importance of hand hygiene at home in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- d. Communication to operators of scholar transport on the necessary hygiene measures during transportation of learners.
- e. Training of cleaners and ground staff to prevent the spread of COVID-1

J. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Routine environmental cleaning is an essential part of disinfection. Organic matter can inactivate many disinfectants. Cleaning reduces the soil load, allowing the disinfectant to work. Removal of germs such as the virus that causes COVID-19, requires thorough cleaning followed by disinfection.

1) Cleaning of minimally touched surfaces

Minimally touched surfaces such as floors, walls, ceilings, blinds, etc. should be thoroughly cleaned and cleaned as follows;

- Detergent solution/wipes should be used as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Damp mopping is preferable to dry mopping.
- Walls and blinds should be cleaned when visibly dusty or soiled.
- Window curtains should be regularly changed in addition to being cleaned when soiled.
- Sinks and basins should be cleaned on a regular basis.

2) Cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces

Frequently touched surfaces are a high-risk for cross-transmission by pathogens that are transferred from people's hands. Items such as **door handles, light switches, lift buttons, working surfaces, tables, railings etc. are frequently touched in public places** (shopping malls, public amenities, airports and other public places where people gather in numbers).

- High touch areas in public places should be cleaned and disinfected regularly and daily.
- Clean general surfaces and fittings when visibly soiled and immediately.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces should be done with clean water and a neutral detergent. Detergents usually have no killing

ability but do remove organic matter which contain microbes and thereby reduce environmental contamination.

- Detergent solution must be used as per manufacturer's instructions. Can use, with the exact choice of detergent determined by the nature of surface and likely degree of contamination.
- Detergent-impregnated wipes may be used but should not be used as a replacement for the mechanical cleaning process.

3) General cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces

Routine environmental cleaning is an essential part of disinfection. Organic matter can inactivate many disinfectants. Cleaning reduces the soil load, allowing the disinfectant to work. Removal of germs such as the virus that causes COVID-19 requires thorough cleaning followed by disinfection.

The length of time that the SARS-COV-2 virus (the cause of COVID-19) survives on inanimate surfaces will vary from hours to days, depending on factors such as the amount of contaminated body fluid, such as respiratory droplets present and environmental temperature and humidity. In general, coronaviruses are unlikely to survive for long once droplets produced by coughing or sneezing dry out.

Regular cleaning and disinfection in schools, scholar transport and in households is critical in controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus. **Surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned before applying disinfectants to further reduce bioburden.**

4) Application of spray disinfectants

Because COVID-19 infection is spread by droplets either through coughing, sneezing or from hands to surfaces, outdoor areas have less risk than crowded indoor areas, in part due to ventilation. Therefore air spraying of outdoor environments is not essential. Focus should be on indoor crowded areas:

- Spray floors, walls and other internal surroundings in areas of high human traffic.
- Spray communal showers and toilets.

Avoid spraying disinfectants near water sources, plants and other vegetation. Under no circumstances should human beings be sprayed with a disinfectant.

i. Technical specifications and use of disinfectants

- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. Disposable alcohol based wipes may be used.

SABS approved detergents and disinfectants;

- Ethyl alcohol (70%) to disinfect small areas between use and cleaning cycles;
- Chlorine, hypochlorite (strength: 1000-10,000 ppm);
- Sodium hypochlorite (household bleach) at 0.5% (equivalent to 5000 ppm);
- Hydrogen peroxide gas – for general disinfection of classes and offices

ii. Cleaning Procedures

- Perform hand hygiene before and after removing gloves;
- Use heavy duty gloves. Elbow-long gloves are recommended;
- Eye protection may be worn, such as goggles or visors;
- Clean with water and disinfectant. **Follow the instructions on the label** to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
- Gloves (if disposable), masks and other waste generated during cleaning should be placed into a waste bin with a lid and disposed of safely.

iii. Daily Duties of Cleaners

- a) Clean all surfaces e.g. floors, bathrooms twice daily with a disinfectant cleaner
- b) Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. taps, doorknobs, reception desks must be cleaned hourly or wiped down with disinfectant wipes
- c) Collect all the bags with possible contaminated waste from classrooms and offices. Tie the bin liners and place in a big refuse bags. Tie the refuse bag again and dispose safely.
- d) Complete cleaning rosters and checklists, to be signed-off daily.

K. USE OF INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

Advocacy material on handwashing must be available and displayed prominently in each classroom, hall, toilet facility and office building.

Important information messages for schools should include the following:

- Wash hands and sanitize hands frequently.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover the mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, then dispose of the used tissue safely in a bin with a lid.
- Maintain at least a one and a half meter distance between yourself and others.
- Use a cloth mask or visor at all times while at school, on the way home and in public.
- Change masks daily and wash them.
- Do not share pencils, pens, toys and other learning objects.
- No hugging, touching, kissing or shaking hand. Rather elbow greet or foot tap.
- Do not share food and school lunch amongst friends.
- Do not share eating utensils amongst learners.
- Change clothes daily and wash them.
- Wash daily- take a shower, bath or bathe every day.
- Do not share tooth brushes or face cloths with anyone
- Do not share utensils of sick people with others.

APPENDIX 1

GUIDELINES ON USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage is based on the risk assessment of each situation and is **ONLY NEEDED** where staff are exposed to an occupation that poses a risk of exposure to COVID -19 infected individuals.

PPE is classified into categories: **eye and face protection** (goggles, visors, plastic shields – for spray disinfecting), **hand protection** (various types of gloves), **body protection** (apron, coats) and **respiratory protection** (depending on risk – various types of masks).

In addition, it is recommended that **cleaners and disinfecting staff** should have access to:

- Heavy duty gloves
- Face masks
- Disposable plastic aprons
- Protective eye gear
- Closed shoes

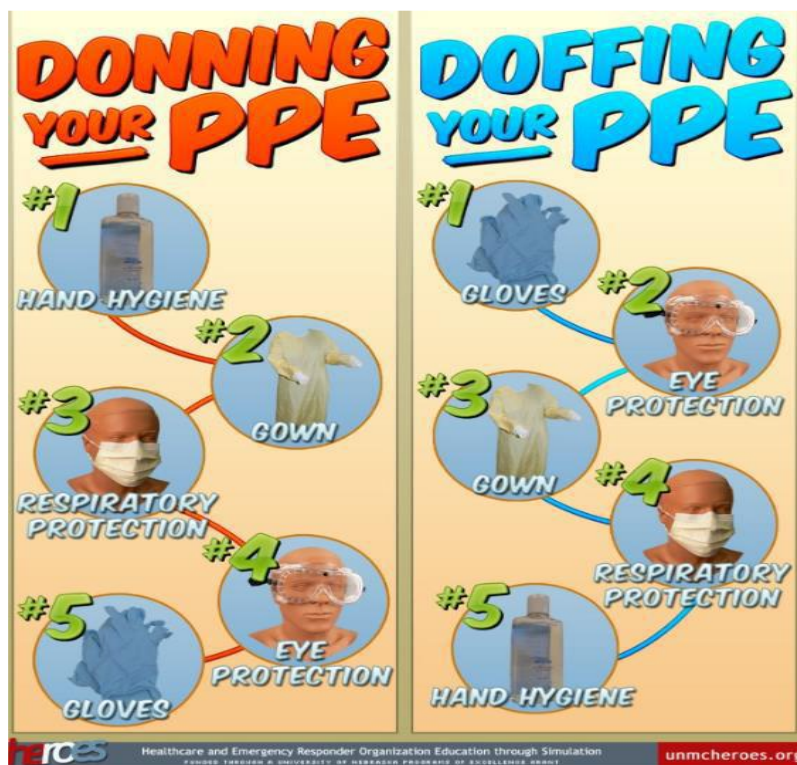
Correct use, necessary hygiene practices and proper disposal of PPE is important to avoid cross contamination from PPE to the user's hands or clothes. Cleaners should perform hand hygiene using the proper techniques before putting on protective gear for cleaning and after removing it, when changing gloves or after any contact with waste material.

The procedure to put on protective gear (see left side of diagram below):

1. Wash hands with soap and water
2. Put on the plastic apron
3. Put on the face mask
4. Put on the eye protection
5. Put on the gloves

The procedure to take off protective gear (see right side of diagram below):

1. Wash the gloves with disinfectant and dry with a paper towel. Place the paper towel in a bin.
2. Remove the gloves and put it on a disinfected surface.
3. Remove the eye protection.
4. Remove the plastic apron and place it in a bin with a liner.
5. Remove the face mask and place it in a bin with a lid and bin liner (plastic bags).
6. Wash your hands with soap and water.



APPENDIX 2

HOW TO PUT ON, USE AND TAKE OFF OF A MASK

Note: Masks are only effective when used in combination with the other Golden Rules of prevention.

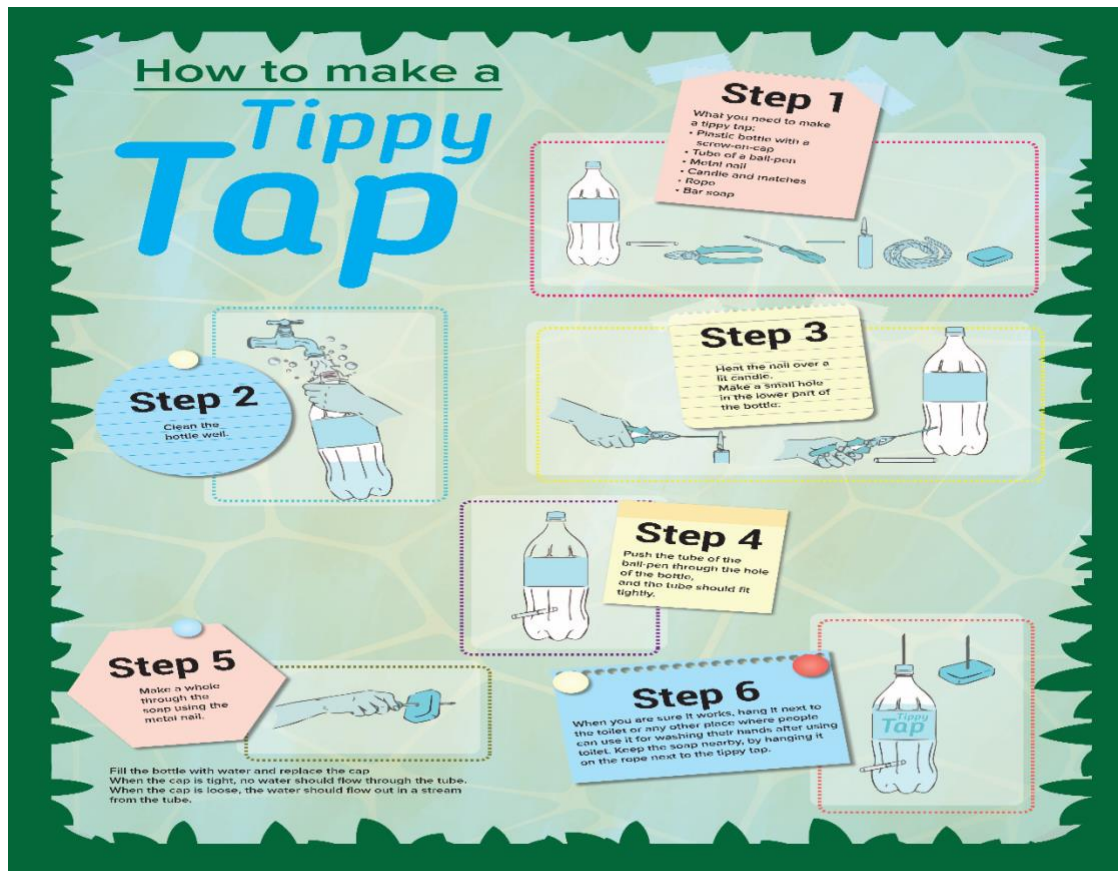
Cloth masks need to be washed with warm soapy water and dried in the sunlight and ironed daily. Communication should be distributed to parents, learners, educators and all staff on taking care of the cloth masks.

Steps to follow

1. Before touching the mask, clean hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
2. Take the mask and inspect it for tears or holes.
3. Orient which side is the top side for the nose.
4. Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards (the coloured side).
5. Place the mask to your face.
6. Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and your chin.
8. Place the elastic loops behind the ears or tie at the back of the head so the mask is snug. Adjust as necessary so that the mask covers the nose and chin comfortably.
7. After use, take off the mask by removing the elastic loops from behind the ears or untie the mask while keeping the mask away from your face and clothes, to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
8. Place the mask in a safe area immediately after use.
9. Perform hand hygiene after touching or discarding the mask – Use alcohol-based hand rub or wash your hands with soap and water.
10. Wash the mask with soapy warm water and dry in sunlight. Iron before use.

APPENDIX 3

How to construct self-made handwashing facilities



Some examples of handwashing stations

