SINT MAARTEN

LANDSCOURANT

National Gazette

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- of op het adres van de uitgever op een digitaal medium.
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MINISTERIAL ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

OF THE 30th JULY 2020

MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

NR.: 2020/936

Considering:

- The severity of COVID-19 and the local transmission rate, all schools on Sint Maarten remained closed for an extended period of time;
- The importance of the continuity of education in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- That there is need for precautionary and preventative measures to be put in place that will meet the needs of each student and school, before the reopening of schools;

Given:

- Article 14, 16 and 33 Landsverordening Funderend Onderwijs (A.B. 2013, GT no. 796);
- Article 21 and 30 Landsverordening Voortgezet Onderwijs (AB 2013, GT no. 794);

HAS DECIDED:

Article 1

To approve the 'Sint Maarten's Plan for Education Continuity Plan – Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic'.

Article 2

This Decision will be published in the National Gazette.

Article 3

This Decision is effective upon date of signature.

Philipsburg, July 30, 2020
Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Objection:
A note of objection can be filed by persons affected by this decision against this administrative decision, on the basis of article 55 jo 56, first subsection, National Ordinance on Administrative Proceedings (Landsverordening Administratieve Rechtspraak), within six weeks after the date of sending or issuance of this decision. The note of objection may be submitted to the same administrative authority that made the administrative decision.

Appeal: Instead of a note of objection persons affected by this decision, in accordance with article 7 jo. 16, of National Ordinance on Administrative Appeal Proceedings (Landsverordening Administratieve Rechtspraak), may appeal this decision at the Court of First Instance St. Maarten within 6 weeks after the day of sending or issuance of this letter.

MINISTERIAL ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION

OF THE 30th JULY 2020

MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT

NR.: 2020/937

Considering:

- The challenges being faced by teachers amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- That teachers are in need of additional support to help them to adapt to the educational challenges amidst the COVID-19 and the current hurricane season;
- The need to prepare teachers for the start of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Given:

- Article 3 and 31 Landsverordening Funderend Onderwijs (A.B. 2013, GT no. 796);
- Article 60 and 103 Landsverordening Voortgezet Onderwijs (AB 2013, GT no. 794);

HAS DECIDED:

Article 1

To approve the 'Plan for Professional Development'.

Article 2

This Decision will be published in the National Gazette.

Article 3

This Decision is effective upon date of signature.

Philipsburg, July 30, 2020
Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Objection:
A note of objection can be filed by persons affected by this decision against this administrative decision, on the basis of article 55 jo 56, first subsection, National Ordinance on Administrative Proceedings (Landsverordening Administratieve Rechtspraak), within six weeks after the date of sending or issuance of this decision. The note of objection may be submitted to the same administrative authority that made the administrative decision.

Appeal: Instead of a note of objection persons affected by this decision, in accordance with article 7 jo. 16, of National Ordinance on Administrative Appeal Proceedings (Landsverordening Administratieve Rechtspraak), may appeal this decision at the Court of First Instance St. Maarten within 6 weeks after the day of sending or issuance of this letter.

LANDSCOURANT VAN SINT MAARTEN Jaargang 2020, nummer 19

Sint Maarten's Plan for Education Continuity

Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Government of Sint Maarten

Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

July 2020 (Version 1)

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Introduction

On January 30th, 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus was declared an international concern due to the alarming levels of spread and severity around the world. As a result, many schools were forced to close and students around the globe were compelled to adapt to a new online learning environment. On March 18th, 2020, this trend was adopted by St. Maarten as the virus began to spread locally. Due to the severity of the disease and the local transmission rate, the Prime Minister of St. Maarten declared a state of emergency on April 4th, 2020, and a lockdown was initiated. Consequently, all schools have remained closed for an extended period of time.

In recent weeks, St. Maarten has recorded a reduction in the number of positive cases on the island and therefore the island's crisis period has passed. In light of this fact and taking into account the importance of the continuity of education, it is vital that all precautionary measures are taken into consideration before the reopening of schools. Consistent application of preventative measures must remain a priority, as flexible and innovative ways are established to meet the needs of each student and school. As such, this paper represents an approach to the reopening of schools taking into account the safety and wellbeing of staff, teachers and students.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this comprehensive framework for the continuity of education is to support schools in developing plans to deliver educational opportunities during this pandemic. The framework clarifies the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) direction and provides general guidance across key topics. Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, MECYS will continue to update this document with new information, resources, and practices as they become available.

1.2Guiding Principles

As stakeholders prepare to resume the delivery of education from our educational institutions, the goal is not to reopen to normal, but to reopen to safety. As such, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport is guided by a set of principles that:

1. Ensure a safe and healthy environment for all students, families and staff.
2. Provide the necessary services to support vulnerable students and teachers.
3. Provide and support the continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders are important for the success of service continuity during a pandemic event. Representatives include:

Ministry Level

- Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
- Ministry of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications
- Ministry of General Affairs
- Ministry of Public Health, Social Welfare and Labor

Education Institution Level

- School Board Representatives
- School Principal/Head
- School Disaster Team Coordinator
- Guidance Counselor
- Information Technology Personnel
- Management Team

2 Approach to Reopening Schools

As the pandemic is currently ongoing, it is important to reopen schools with caution to avoid a second wave of infections. Due to this, a three-step approach will be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and students. In addition, all schools must adhere to the Workplace Safety Guidelines established by the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor.

The below table provides guidelines that should be conducted, prior, during and after the reopening of schools.

Three Step Approach for Reopening Schools COVID19	
Step 1: Prior to Reopening of Schools	
Educational Setting	**Social Setting**
- **Develop operational plans for conducting lessons in a safe manner in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this document and submit same to the Safety and Emergency Management Committee at SEMCMECYS@sintmaartengov.org and to the Division of Inspection – ECYS for approval at least two weeks prior to the reopening of the education institution.** - **Assess psychological state of students and teachers. To be facilitated by Care Teams in collaboration with the Division of Student Support Services as needed. Plan to further strengthen the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and staff so that they can meet the needs of students, guide them and** - **Assess whether the curriculum should be amended taking into account the staggered approach of reopening schools and consult with the relevant stakeholders.** - **Assess the daily number of students that can be accommodated taking into account the safety guidelines.** - **Assess what resources teachers might require in order to conduct lessons.** - **Identify vulnerable students and teachers and plan for extraordinary means for conducting lessons and meeting needs. Example: vulnerable student / teacher can learn / teach remotely. Plan to ensure that the continuity of education is secured for the most vulnerable and that maximum possible engagement with their peers is able to take place (e.g. in cases where students may not have access to a computer to participate in online classes, plan to accommodate these students on the school's campus in the school's computer lab, engage with other community partners like**	- Cleaning and sanitizing of school premises including walkways, doorframes, classrooms, railings, lavatories, light switches, desks, chairs, sports facilities, and all materials that students are to use. - Determine the number of students that can be placed into one classroom ensuring 2 meters social distancing. Place desks accordingly. - Ensure classrooms are well ventilated. - Floors should be marked to ensure proper distancing amongst students; for example, to wait to enter classrooms or to wait to come into the school's entrance. - Place sanitation materials in required areas, including entrance to school, entrance to classrooms where lessons will be held, etc. - Place (no touch) bins throughout the facility. - Posters should be made available with all guidelines and rules to

community centers to support students and meet hardware needs where possible). - **Plan to deliver education utilizing alternative modalities. Plan to assign work / projects / assessments for the students to complete via distance learning at home given increased need for blended approach to learning and to secure the continuity of learning in the event a short, medium or long term closure is required (taking into account the hurricane season as well, if applicable).** - **Plan to conduct assessments considering the maximum number of students that are allowed on the school compound at any given time, based on social distancing requirements. In addition, an assessment of the availability of teachers and staff should be taken into consideration.** - **Planning should include, how to minimize the movement of large numbers of students on the compound / classroom (e.g. in Secondary Education, Advanced Vocational Education, Higher Education settings, the students remain in one classroom and the teachers rotate, introduction of a shift system); how to limit the number of children using the same materials or being in close contact (e.g. using a play group system for younger students, limited / no contact games or activities, developing guidelines for the use of the school library, etc.); how many teachers are necessary to carry out lessons and supervision in person and remotely; the number of teachers / staff necessary to carry out the monitoring of safety protocols based on the number of persons on the school premises.** - **Rules and guidelines regarding expectations of students and faculty should be shared with concerned persons in writing and orally no less than one week before the reopening of schools, including safety protocols (such as social distancing amongst managements, teachers and staff), as well as general expectations about how to enter and leave the school's premises as well as classrooms,** - **Communication to students should include but is not limited to information pertaining to parents' responsibility in the timely pick up of students after school (should the parents wish to pick up his/her child).** **informing that telephone or virtual appointments be made where such are necessary; that students who are displaying signs and symptoms of a cold or flu are not permitted on the school premises, as well as the expectations of student behaviors while on the school premises.** - **Identify an area on the school premises where students can wait once lessons are finished, taking into account social distancing and proper hygiene practices.** - **Identify and assign a supervisor that will ensure compliance on sanitation and adherence to new protocols.** - **Plan for the utilization of the school bussing service to meet student needs.** - **Ensure that proper signage related to expectations are clearly displayed for students, staff and visitors.** - **Assess how frequently cleaning staff is needed and plan accordingly.** - **Create a check list for parents, students and staff to decide whether student/staff can go to school. The checklist should include;** - **underlying medical conditions and vulnerabilities, to protect the student/staff;**	place around the school premises as a reminder.

- **recent illness or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, to prevent spread to others;** - **special circumstances in the home environment, to tailor support as needed;** - **special considerations regarding school transport as needed.** - **Conduct lessons outdoors, observing social distancing protocols, when possible.** - **Plan to maintain a small supply of medical masks for persons who may fall ill on the school's campus.** - **Plan to ensure that cleaners are informed of the required cleaning protocols and are equipped with required supplies.**	
Step 2: During the Reopening of Schools	
- **Assess how many students are not in possession of required material to successfully follow lessons.** - **Ensure that the number of recommended students in a classroom are adhered to.** - **Ensure the school's premises are supervised to ensure that safety protocols are maintained. Ensuring social distancing and the use of masks / face shields.** - **Ensure that students that are absent due to illness are required to provide a doctor note as proof of illness.** - **Ensure that if student has a known condition (such as asthma) that may cause them to have the sniffles every so often, that is not associated with COVID-19, that permission to attend in class instruction be supported with a doctor's note.** - **Ensure frequent structured follow up for students who are ill or are unable to participate in regular in-class instruction.** - **Ensure that assignments / projects / assessments are assigned to students for days that in-class instruction is not required. Provide hard copies where necessary and give clear instructions on expectations of students.** - **Monitor absenteeism rates. In case where absenteeism rates exceed regular absenteeism, Schools should inform CPS so that the Health Ministry can ensure that a cluster is not developing, and if so, address it.** - **Maintain regular contact with CPS and seek clarity when in doubt.** - **Maintain open communication with Staff, Parents and Students regarding relevant developments within the school community, the need for change and the prevention steps that the school is taking to keep all concerned safe and their role in this process (e.g. guidance on usage of masks in school, guidance on coughing etiquette, what to do if a student is ill, what to do if a member in the household has COVID-19, etc.). Utilize various means to inform parents.**	- No sick persons from the administration, staff, teachers or students are allowed on the school compound. - Sanitization of students and teachers', staffs' hands upon entering the school premises. - All visitors, staff and teachers accessing the school premises are required to wear a mask / face shield. This applies to Primary and Secondary schools. Students within Secondary schools, Advanced Vocational Education and Higher Education are also required to wear a mask. - Students, teachers, and staff are always required to maintain social distancing of minimum 2 meters. In cases where this cannot be maintained a combination of mask and shield should be used. - Students are required to leave the classroom once lessons are completed and wait in the assigned waiting area. No gatherings of more than 3 adults or secondary students are allowed for socializing purposes, in or around the school's premises. Students, teachers and staff should maintain 2 meters distance at all times. - The number of persons using restrooms is to be managed taking into account Social Distancing. Frequent sanitization of the facility is to be monitored. - All offices, classrooms including desks and chairs, walkways, lavatories. computer stations, and

	all frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized daily after students have completed their lessons. - Proper arrangements for school bussing are made so that buses are available immediately after lessons are scheduled to finish. - Parents and caregivers are not allowed on school premises unless it is an urgent matter. Parents and caregivers are advised to contact the school by telephone or email.
Step 3: After the Reopening	
Solicit feedback from teachers and students on experience of lessons. Including psycho-social factors. Ensure baseline data and continuous monitoring for different school levels and gender. **Measure the effectiveness of the new approach to schooling:** - **How well has the school been able to develop, implement and monitor distance learning strategies?** - **What proportion of children were reached?** - **What is the feedback from students, parents and teachers? The effects of policies and measures on educational objectives and learning outcomes.** - **The effects of policies and measures on health and well-being of children, siblings, staff, parents and other family members.** - **The trend in school drop out after lifting the restrictions.** **Revise Contingency and Safety Plans based on lessons learned.**	Required adjustments / recommendations are made, consultations with staff, students and parents, to better meet the needs of students, teachers and staff in the delivery of education during the pandemic.

2.1 Approach 1: Primary Education, Secondary Education Exam, and Special Education Students

Please find below, the proposed concept for Approach 1:

- Primary school students and secondary school exam students will return to school using the following approach:
    - Students will return to in-class instruction while ensuring proper social distancing between students and between students and teachers. Schools will determine what percentage of students can be accommodated on a given day and a schedule should be derived from this data. E.g.50% of the class will attend school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while the other 50% of the class attends school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The schedule can rotate weekly to allow a fair amount of in class instruction amongst students. The schools will determine the allotted time for in-class instruction for the various grades.

- School should provide clear instructions regarding students' expectations on the days that students are not required to report to in-class instruction. E.g. students should recap what was taught in class using online platforms and/or hard copies given on the days of attendance and to complete assignments / projects / assessments as instructed.
- On the days that students do not have to attend in class instruction but also do not have access to the internet or a computer at home, schools should consider allowing these students to use the school's computers taking into account the established health and sanitation protocols.
- Schools should be aware that exemptions might be necessary if a student or teacher's doctor advises such. In the event this occurs, students should be offered the opportunity to follow online classes and should be provided with hard copies and be consistently monitored to ensure the highest level of education continuity. Teachers whose doctors advise that he or she is considered high risk should be properly trained to administer online classes and teach using online platforms.
- COVID-19 knowledge classes as well as proper hygiene classes are advised to be implemented and carried out as a form of keeping students, teachers, and staff up to date and reminded of the importance of mitigation efforts.

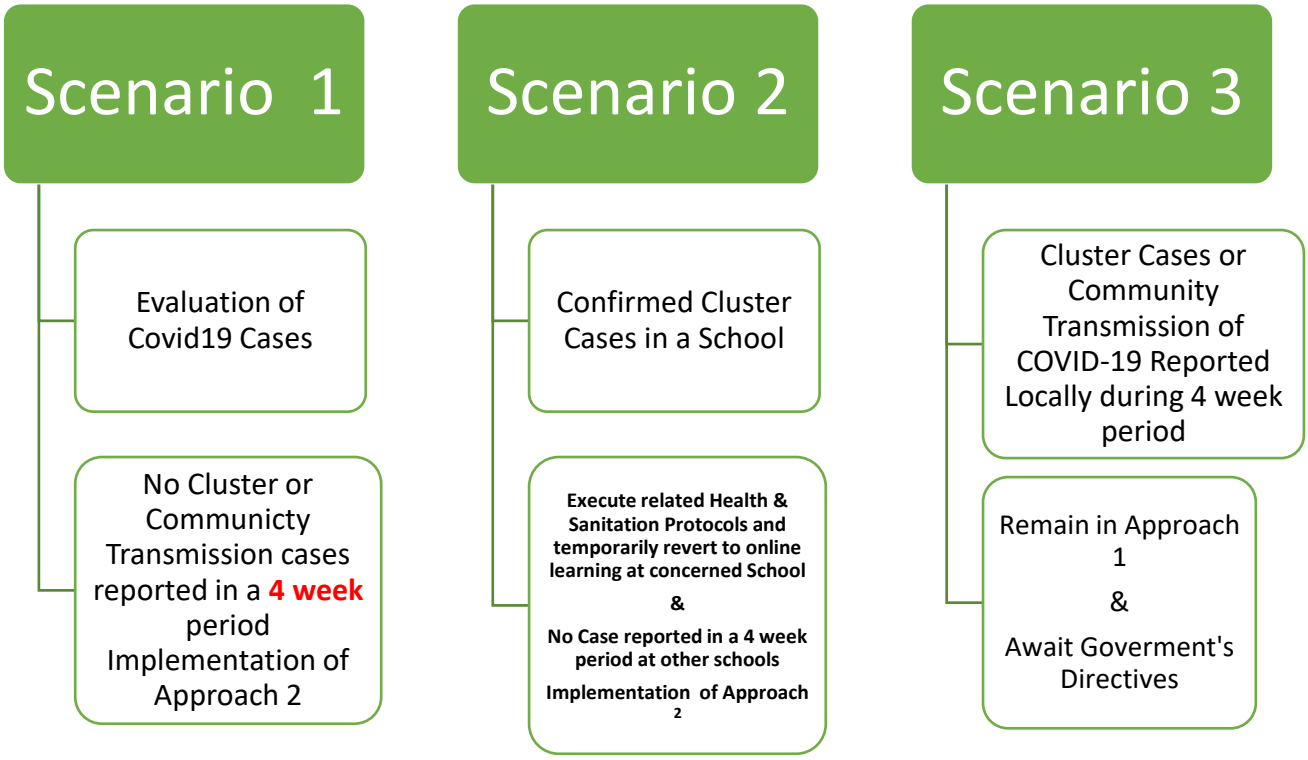
- Special Needs Education students will return to school using the following approach:
  - Schools will determine what percentage of students can return taking into account proper social distancing between students and between students and teachers. The days and hours allotted for in-class instruction will be determined by the school.
  - Schools should be aware that exemptions might be necessary for students and teachers whose doctor indicated that they are high risk. E.g. These students can follow online classes where possible, should be provided with hard copies and should be consistently monitored to ensure the highest level of education continuity. Teachers who are considered high risk should be properly trained to administer online classes and to teach using online platforms.

All Secondary students who are not in the final year should remain studying online in this approach. Special arrangements should be made for students who do not have access to online platforms or devices.

Specific guidelines pertaining to measures to be taken within a Primary School and a Secondary School will be included in an attachment to this document.

2.1.1 Assessments

Assessments will be conducted after the implementation of Approach 1. These assessments will be carried out to determine whether new cases of COVID-19 have been reported on the island and to evaluate the effectiveness of the current approach to education continuity.



In the event a student experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while on school premises, the student should be placed in an isolation room until picked up by a parent or caregiver. In the event a teacher or staff member experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while on school premises, the teacher or staff member should be requested to return home and contact their general practitioner. In the cases described before, or in the event the student / teacher / staff member stay home and report COVID-19 related symptoms, these persons (or parents or guardians in the case of students) should be requested to monitor symptoms and to contact their health care provider if symptoms persist.

In the event a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student / teacher / staff member who was actively attending school, the school should await further directions from CPS.

2.2 Approach 2: Primary Education, All Secondary Education, Special Education, Advanced Vocational and Higher Education Students

Approach 2 will comprise of the following measures:

Primary Education students, Secondary Education exam students and Special Education students will continue to attend school according to the guidelines detailed in Approach 1.

All other Secondary Education Students will follow the guidelines below:

- Students will use a combination of in class instruction and online platforms.

- Schools will determine what percentage of students can attend school full days. E.g 50% of students will attend full day classes twice per week and the other 50% will attend full day classes on two other distinct days. (E.g. Set A attends on Mondays and Wednesdays and Set B attends on Tuesdays and Thursdays.) School should submit a proposal on a staggered approach based on their individual circumstances and capabilities.
- On the days, that students are not required to attend in class instruction, online classes will be administered (including Fridays).
- Fridays can also be used for remedial classes.

Advanced Vocational and Higher Education students will follow the guidelines below:

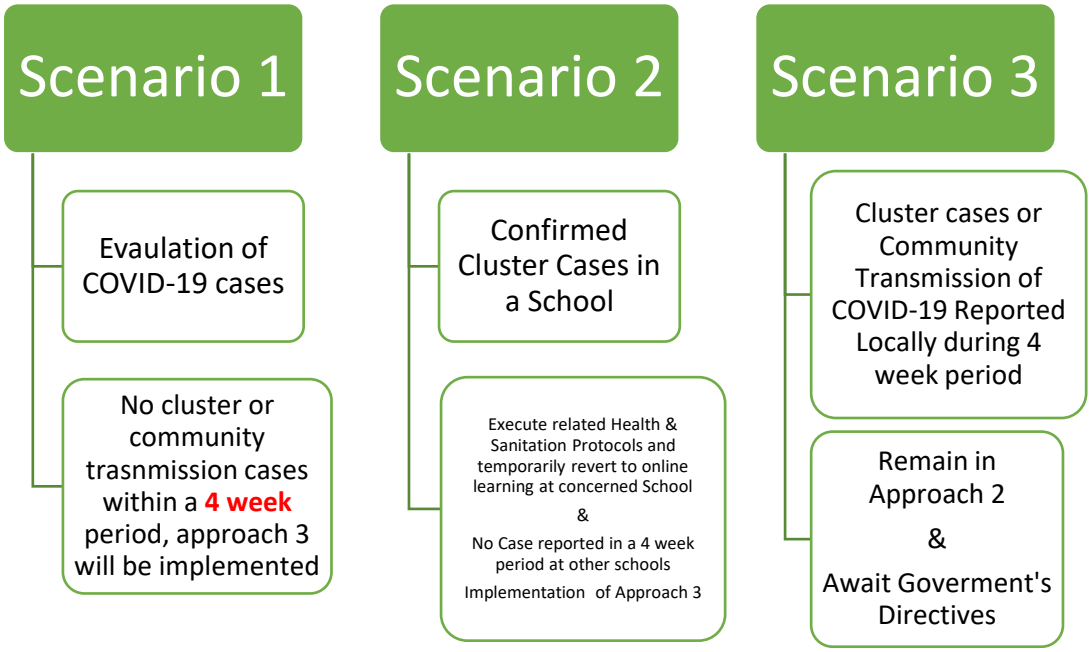
- Educational program delivery will be coordinated so as to provide all students with an equal opportunity to participate in face to face or online learning activities. Where face to face learning is facilitated, the school is required to ensure that all health and sanitation protocols are followed to minimize the risk of spreading the virus if a student, teacher or staff member is infected.

In all educational institutions in which education is being delivered in Approach 2, the following guidelines will apply:

- Exemptions should be made for students and teachers whose general practitioner has deemed them high risk. These students should have the opportunity to follow online classes, should be provided with hard copies and should be consistently monitored to ensure the highest level of education continuity. Teachers who are determined to be high risk should be properly trained to administer online classes and to teach using online platforms.
- Schools should consider providing COVID-19 knowledge classes as well as proper hygiene classes in an effort to keep students, teachers and staff members up to date and reminded of the importance of mitigation efforts.

2.2.1 Assessments

Assessments will be conducted after the implementation of Approach 2 on a biweekly basis. These assessments will be carried out to determine whether new cases of COVID-19 have been reported and to evaluate the effectiveness of the current approach to education continuity.



In the event a student experiences COVID-19 related symptom while on school premises, the student should be placed in an isolation room until picked up by a parent or caregiver. In the event a teacher or staff member experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while on school premises, the teacher or staff member should be requested to return home and contact his or her general practitioner. In the cases described before, or in the event the student / teacher / staff member stay home and report COVID-19 related symptoms, these persons (or parents or guardians in the case of students) should be requested to monitor symptoms and to contact their health care provider if symptoms persist.

In the event a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student / teacher / staff member who was actively attending school, the school should await further instructions from CPS.

2.3 Approach 3: All Students

The following should be established prior to the implementation of Approach 3 and 4:

- The local situation and epidemiology of Covid-19: No known active cases of Covid19 on the island.
- Properly established School setting and ability to maintain COVID-19 prevention and control measures while operating at 100%.
- All recommended measures pertaining to the reopening of schools including health and safety guidelines outlined in this document are met where and when possible.
- Well established method to monitor schools on a continuous basis. This can be facilitated by the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor as well as the Division of Inspection ECYS.

All students on various academic levels are to return to school.

All primary students will return to school as normal:

- Regular school hours will apply.
- Staggered break times should be implemented if possible.
- Social distancing should be maintained when and where possible.
- All health and safety guidelines mentioned in this document should be strictly communicated and adhered to.

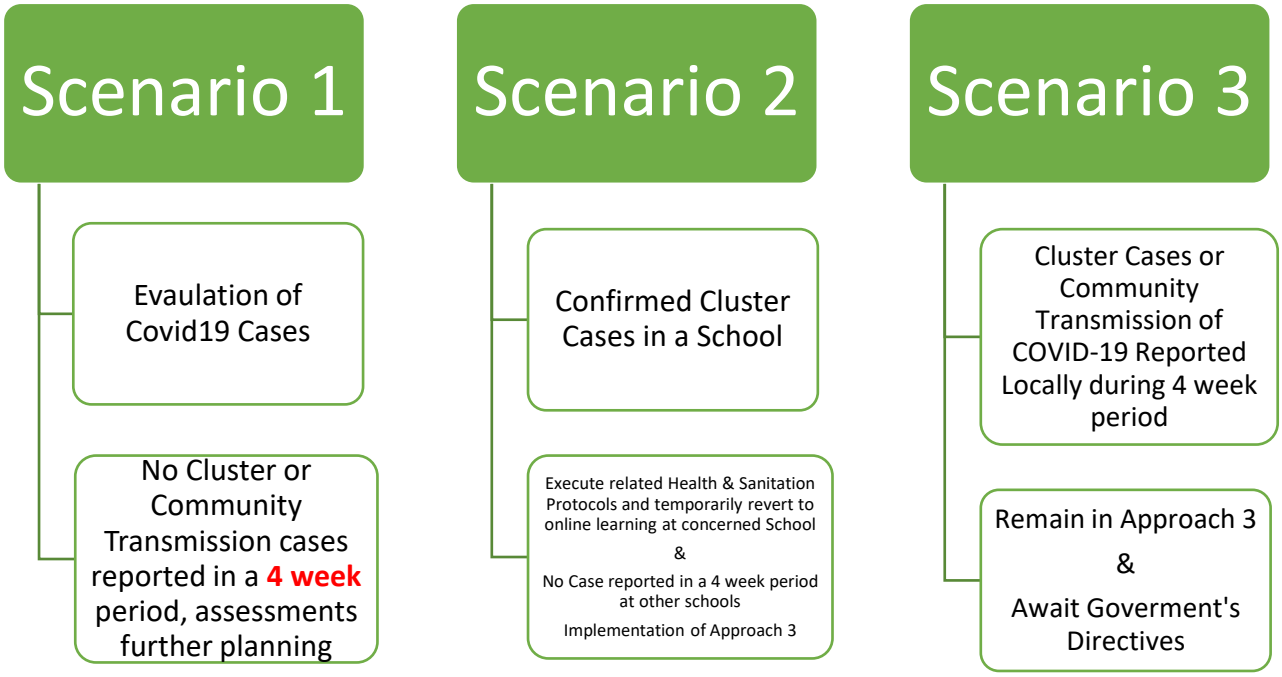
- All secondary students will resume using a combination of in-class and online instruction
  - 50% of students will attend full day classes twice per week and the other 50% will attend classes on two other distinct days. (E.g. Set A attends on Mondays and Wednesdays and Set B attends on Tuesdays and Thursdays) Schools can submit a proposal on a staggered approach based on their individual circumstances and capabilities.
  - On days, that students are not required to attend in class instruction, online classes will be administered including Fridays)
  - Fridays will also be used for remedial classes.

- All Vocational students will resume using a staggered approach
  - Students will use a rotation schedule that will consist of two groups. One group with attend school two days per week and the other group will attend three days per week. The schedule should rotate so that both groups receive the same amount of in-class instruction time.

- Higher Education students will resume as normal
  - Regular school hours will apply
  - Social distancing should be maintained when and where possible.
  - All health and safety guidelines mentioned in this document should be strictly communicated and adhered to.

2.3.1 Assessments

Assessments will be conducted after the implementation of Approach 3. These assessments will be carried out to determine whether new cases of COVID-19 have been reported and to evaluate the effectiveness of the current approach to education continuity and how teachers, students, and parents are coping.



In the event a student experiences COVID-19 related symptom while on school premises, the student should be placed in an isolation room until picked up by a parent or caregiver. In the event a teacher or staff member experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while on school premises, the teacher or staff member should be requested to return home and contact his or her general practitioner. In the cases described before, or in the event the student / teacher / staff member stay home and report COVID-19 related symptoms, these persons (or parents or guardians in the case of students) should be requested to monitor symptoms and to contact their health care provider if symptoms persist.

In the event a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student / teacher / staff member who was actively attending school, the school should await further instructions from CPS.

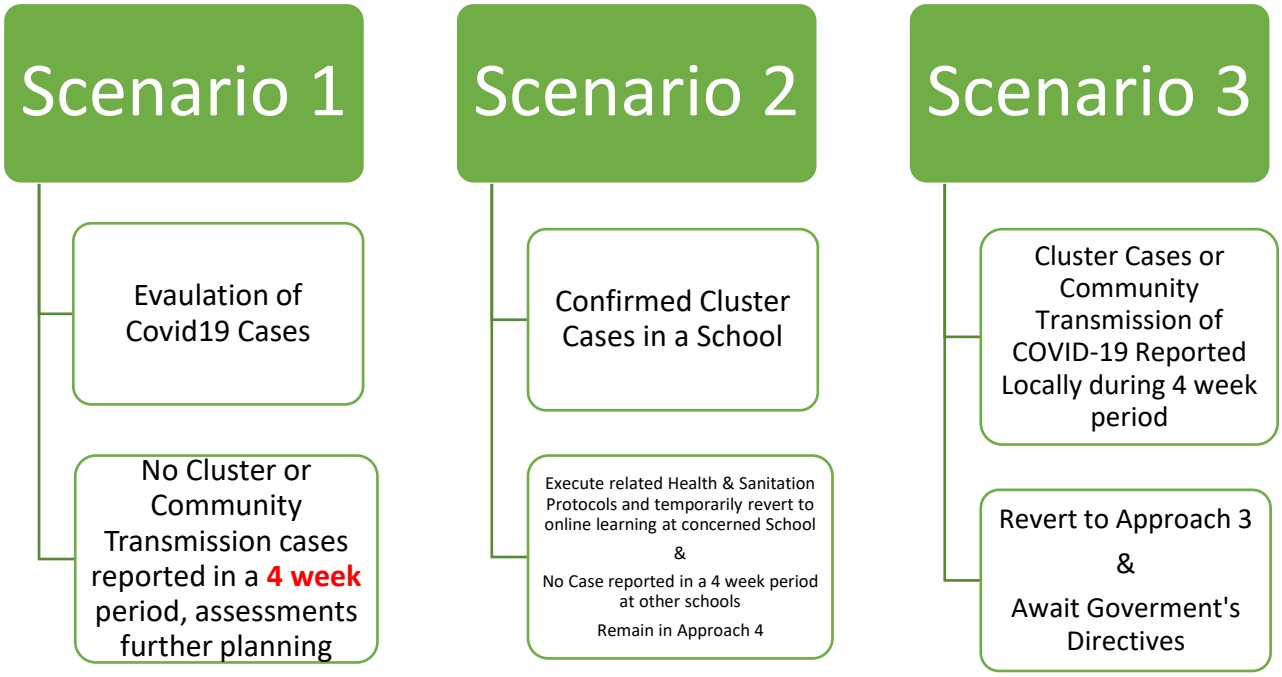
Approach 4: All Students Resume as Normal

The abovementioned precautionary measures listed under Approach 3 should be established prior to the implementation of Approach 4.

- All Educational Institutions will resume and operate as normal
    - Regular school hours and in-class instruction will apply
    - Schools will be advised to maintain proper hygiene and sanitization protocols.
    - Strict Surveillance by the Ministry of Public Health, Social Development and Labor as well as by schools will be enforced.

2.4.1 Assessments

Assessments will be conducted after the implementation of Approach 4. These assessments will be carried out to determine whether new cases of COVID-19 have been reported and to evaluate the effectiveness of the current approach to education continuity and how teachers, students, and parents are coping.



In the event a student experiences COVID-19 related symptom while on school premises, the student should be placed in an isolation room until picked up by a parent or caregiver. In the event a teacher or staff member experiences COVID-19 related symptoms while on school premises, the teacher or staff member should be requested to return home and contact his or her general practitioner. In the cases described before, or in the event the student / teacher / staff member stay home and report COVID-19 related symptoms, these persons (or parents or guardians in the case of students) should be requested to monitor symptoms and to contact their health care provider if symptoms persist.

In the event a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a student / teacher / staff member who was actively attending school, the school should await further instructions from CPS.

3 General Guidelines

With the reopening of schools, it is important that guidelines are established to ensure the safety of the students and staff. Below, are general guidelines for students and staff that should be maintained and followed at all times:

- Wash hands regularly with soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Cough and sneeze in your elbow.
- Use tissue paper to blow your nose, and immediately discard of used tissues.
- Wash hands after blowing your nose.
- Do not shake hands.
- Maintain as much social distance as possible between students and teachers.
- Staff, Teachers and Students should wear facemask when social distancing is not possible

3.1 Social Distancing

The available space in the school buildings should be used optimally to ensure that as much distance is created between students and between students and the teachers, respectively. The following guidelines should be strictly adhered to:

- A minimum of 2 meters is required between students and teachers, between teaching staff, and between parents when dropping off and picking up their children.
- The classrooms will have to be rearranged to create more space between desks in the classroom. The workspaces in practical classrooms in vocational education can be used in a staggered manner to ensure safe social distancing.
- The walkways in schools will have to be organized in a way that one-way traffic is created as much as possible to ensure a minimum distance of 2 meters.
- The staff room will have to be organized in a way that 2 meters can be maintained. Teachers can use the staff room with at least two chairs between each other. Teachers can have lunch in their own classroom with maximum one other teacher in the classroom while adhering to the safe social distance of 2 meters.

3.1.1 Sport Activities

- Reduce physical closeness between players when possible, social distancing should be practiced amongst students where and when possible
- Minimize sharing of equipment gear
- Promote outdoor activities
- Identify Small groups and keep them together
- Students are required to wash their hands prior to the start of a sport activity
- Sports material should be cleaned and sanitized after every class / prior to usage

* As the Covid-19 pandemic persists, sports guidelines and recommendations are subject to change*

3.2 Exemptions for Students and Personnel

- Students and staff considered to be high-risk should seek a medical opinion from his or her general practitioner regarding the resumption of school. A student or staff member is considered high-risk when he/she has any of the following pre-existing health conditions:
- Lung Disease
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Underlying Medical Conditions
- Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Students and staff residing in a household with someone that has any of the abovementioned symptoms should also seek advice from their general practitioner. Students and staff who have been in contact with a person who has been found to be COVID-19 positive are required to stay home and self-monitor symptoms in accordance with CPS guidelines.

Additionally, teachers or staff members that are 60 years or older should also seek advice from their general practitioner.

3.3 Special Education

For special education, the same general guidelines are used, with some adjustments:

- Where physical contact is necessary, such as to give assistance when using the bathroom, when there are physical limitations that require general assistance, and/or when there are first aid and nursing procedures that need to be carried out, the following:
    - During first aid and/or nursing procedures and the administering of general assistance, staff members should wear personal protective equipment in the form of face masks, face shields and disposable medical gloves.
    - Safety is paramount, so if employees often have to physically intervene with a student, or if the student behaves in such a way that might harm his/herself and/or others, the school may consider exempting this student from in class instruction during Approaches 1 & 2.
    - For the use of face masks, face shields and gloves, instructions and/or infographic must be publicly displayed and distributed throughout the school, and those involved should be instructed when and how to use them. The advice here is to act as much as possible in line with the policy that applies in youth care with regard to protective equipment.

3.4 Hygiene Measures

Schools must ensure compliance with the following general hygiene regulations:

1. The following must be available in every school and classroom:
    a. Running water and regular soap or access to disinfecting gel or alcohol-based hand rub that is at least 60% alcohol.
    b. Paper towels
    c. Disinfectant sprays
2. Regular (several times a day) disinfection of teaching materials, toys, play materials, equipment (devices), door knobs, light switches and the workspaces. **Please note: Toys and play material that cannot be washed/sanitized should not be used.**
3. Regular disinfection of materials used by teachers including coffee makers, copiers, water coolers and the like.
4. Daily intensive cleaning of the classrooms, stair railings, door frames, light switches, toilets, common areas and all other surfaces with which several people come into contact.
5. In the bathrooms, toilet paper and regular soap to wash hands must also be continuously available to the students.
6. The canteens must comply with the hygiene regulations if they provide services.

One or more staff members must be responsible for the implementation and/or control of these measures. These persons will be responsible for ensuring that the previously mentioned measures are implemented in stairwells, corridors, offices, common areas, canteens, classrooms and other common areas on the school premises. Well maintained checklists, to monitor implementation are recommended.

3.5 Building Access

The following guidelines have been established to facilitate the movement of persons on the school premises:

- Students will have access to the playground/school grounds during break time, throughout all 4 approaches, seeing that play and social interaction is an important part of socio-emotional development. Break times will be staggered, and each class will have access to the playground/school grounds at a different time.
- A designated place for the drop-off and pick-up of students will have to be created where students can say farewell to parent/caregiver before entering the school grounds. A maximum of one adult may drop-off or pick-up student (s) directly in front of the school gate. Parents or caregivers should practice 2-meter social distancing amongst other parents or caregivers when dropping off or picking up students from school. School personnel should be stationed outside to manage delivery and pick-up of students. School personnel will wear masks and face shields and contact with parent(s)/caregiver(s) should be nihil. Parent(s)/caregiver(s) are not allowed to enter the school grounds without an appointment and should always adhere to social distancing of at least 2 meters when the need arises to enter the school premises.
- Primary schools can opt to create circles on the ground to facilitate waiting areas with appropriate social distancing measures taken into account.
- Secondary schools could mark safe social distancing lines on the ground as done at entrances of supermarkets.
- If classrooms do not have individual outside entrances, the schools will implement staggered arrival and collection times to ensure safe social distancing. School personnel will have to ensure that students do not linger after classes but make their way home immediately.

3.6 School Transportation

Buses are known as mobile environments that are prone to the spread of infectious diseases such as colds and the flu. In addition to the number of students who may introduce bacteria and viruses when they board the bus, surfaces such as the seat backs, seat belts and handrails can also contribute to the further spread of germs.

Due to the aforementioned, the following guidelines have been established to reduce the spread of germs and viruses on school buses:

1. Stick a multilingual laminated notice outside of the school bus at the entrance explain the rules to all passengers that are to use the service.
2. Mark the seats clearly that are to be used and those that cannot be used. Social distancing to be maintained at all times.
3. Determine and only allow the maximum number of persons per bus type for boarding at 50% of the seating capacity of the vehicle. The total is including operator.
4. Ensure that driver and passengers adhere to the rules
5. Do not allow passengers to sit on the seat next to the driver. Proper distance is to be kept from bus operator at all times.
6. Ensure each passenger properly wears a facemask as a strict condition for boarding.
7. The driver properly wears a facemask during service.
8. Windows of the bus are to remain open at all times to promote air circulation.
9. Students are to be seated in every other row of the bus.
10. School Buses should be cleaned and sanitized before and after every trip.
11. Hand sanitizers should be provided to students upon boarding the school buses.
12. Students should be required to maintain social distance when using the school bus.
13. Signs should be placed in school buses as a reminder of proper hygiene when symptoms of the flu or cold occur. These include:
    a. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
    b. Cover mouth and nose with bent elbow when you cough and sneeze
    c. Use hand sanitizers
    d. If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

3.7 Training of Teachers and School Managers

Training of Teachers and School Managers on Remote Learning and Ways to support students out of school is to be facilitated to ensure that remote learning can be more effectively delivered.

3.9 Implementation of Remedial Programs to Mitigate Learning Loss

Learning loss refers to any specific or general loss of academic knowledge and skills due to extended gaps or discontinuities in a student's education. With schools closed for an

extended period of time already, and summer vacation coming soon, experts predict that the effects of learning loss this year will be detrimental to students. Therefore, it is important for schools to consider implementing remedial programs for students.

Remedial programs could be hosted after school, once Approach 3 is implemented, once those administering these programs adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document. Schools should also consider introducing strategies to structurally remediate learning loss. This should include, but not be limited to teachers recapping and summarizing what was most recently taught on a subject at the beginning of the lesson before moving on to a new topic.

3.10 Promoting COVID-19 Information Sharing

It is important for students, parents/guardians, and staff members to understand basic information about COVID-19, including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted, and how to prevent transmission. It is also important to stay informed about COVID-19 through reputable sources such as UNICEF, IFRC, WHO, and national health ministry advisories. Be aware of information/myths that may circulate by word-of-mouth or online.

School management should coordinate with Collective Prevention Services (CPS) and follow guidelines from the national health and education authorities. They should also share known information with staff, caregivers and students, providing updated information on the disease situation, including prevention and control efforts at school, and utilize parent-teacher committees and other mechanisms to promote information sharing. School management must also inform CPS, the Division of Inspection Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, staff and parents immediately of any COVID-19 positive case, while maintaining confidentiality. School management must also foster a culture that does not encourage stigmatization of persons who may have been diagnosed or have had a family member diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, School Management should reinforce that caregivers should alert the school and CPS if someone in their home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and keep their child at home. Teachers should be sure to address children's questions and concerns, including through the development of materials such as posters which can be placed on notice boards, in restrooms, and other central locations and should remain alert regarding the health and wellbeing of their students.

It is the responsibility of the School's Management to report the daily number of suspected COVID-19 cases of students or staff members to the Inspectorate of ECYS and Collective Prevention Services (CPS).

3.11 Communication Guidelines

Schools should strengthen communication mechanisms that promote local dialogue to engage with parents and children on education matters.

Guidelines for communicating with students and parents are as follows:

- Immediately communicate accurate, timely information and address health concerns, as parents may be reluctant to send their children to school.

- Protect the privacy of any COVID-19 positive students and/or staff as much as possible.
- Instill confidence in the approach to education continuity being taken.
- Correct misinformation and put to rest any public doubt or fear.
- Appeal to parents to disseminate accurate information on the reopening of the school system.

It is important for schools to communicate regularly with teachers, parents, students, and the community on a whole, especially about information pertaining to the dates and conditions of reopening and if necessary, closures. It is recommended for schools to use multiple channels of communication, such as radio, television, and the internet to do so.

The Ministry will be engaging with school boards to establish where support is needed as it relates to communication with teachers, parents and students. Further details can be found in the addendum to this document.

4 Cleaning and Disinfecting

Safety and sanitary procedures for furniture, equipment, laundry and the environment:

- **Cleaning** refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Disinfecting** refers to using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants (Clorox, Lysol and Purell), to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface *after* cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

4.1 Cleaning

The following guidelines are recommended while cleaning:

- Wear reusable or disposable gloves for routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Clean surfaces using regular soap and water, then use disinfectant.
- Cleaning with regular soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. High touch surfaces include:
    - Chairs, tables, doorknobs, doorframes, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, white boards/ blackboards, keyboards, sport facilities, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.

4.2Disinfecting

The following guidelines are recommended while disinfecting:

- The use of EPA-registered such as Clorox, Lysol and Purell household disinfectants are recommended. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

- Many products recommend:
  - Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label);
  - Precautions such as always wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

- Diluted household bleach solutions may be used if appropriate for the surface.
  - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening may not be suitable for disinfection.
  - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
  - To make a bleach solution, mix five tablespoons bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
  - Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.

4.2.1 Electronics

For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls:

- Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics.
- Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
- If no instructions are provided, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol. Let surface dry thoroughly after use.

4.3 Garbage Disposal

To dispose of garbage, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Ensure there are dedicated, lined (non-touch) trash cans throughout the premises.
- Dispose of garbage daily. Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags and handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands afterwards.

5 Health Measures

The following specific health measures are to be enforced:

1. Persons with COVID-19 related symptoms will stay at home, symptoms being:
   a. Common cold symptoms;
   b. Sneezing;
   c. Coughing;
   d. Sore throat;
   e. Difficulty breathing;
   f. Fever.

2. The person exhibiting flu like symptoms may only leave the home if he/she has not shown symptoms for a period of 24 hours.
3. In case of fever (from 38 degrees Celsius) and awaiting testing results for Covid-19, all members of the household should stay at home. If the results are negative, members of the family can leave their homes.
4. Students with symptoms must call to seek advice from their general practitioner. In the event a person does not have a General Practitioner, he or she is advised to call CPS.
5. Staff members with flu-like symptoms should seek advice from their general practitioner.
6. Students or staff members that fall within a high-risk group can, in consultation between parent(s)/caregiver(s) and the school, based on directives from their health care professionals, be exempted from in class instruction and continue with distance learning.
7. Students or staff members with household members that fall within a high-risk group can, in consultation between parent(s)/caregiver(s) and the school, based on directives from their health care professionals, be exempted from in class instruction and continue with distance learning.

5.1 Medical Procedures

The following medical guidelines should always be maintained and adhered to:

- Minor first aid procedures occurring on school premises can be performed using a mask and shield. Proper protection should be worn when performing any procedures involving bodily fluids like blood or vomit.
- When intensive first aid or nursing care must be provided, members of staff must wear personal protective equipment such as gloves, face mask and shield.
- Staff members must wear personal protective equipment for the provision of first aid and / or nursing care in special education.

The abovementioned advice indicates that one should act as much as possible in line with the general policy guidelines when administering youth care.

5.2 Terms for Discharge

The following guidelines should be adhered to as it relates to discharge of students and employees:

- As per general guidelines, if a staff member develops flu-like symptoms during the day, the staff member is obligated to go home.
- If a student develops flu-like symptoms during the day, the parent(s)/caregiver(s) ought to be contacted, and the student should be immediately picked up by a parent or caregiver. Please refer to section 5.3 for further guidelines and procedures.
- When in doubt of the health circumstances of a student or staff member, his/her temperature should be measured at school using an no touch thermometer. If this is

not possible, the person is required to go home. In the event an ear thermometer is used, it should be disinfected immediately after use.
    - **Please note:** Due to the fact that we live in a tropical climate, students or staff member that are not well should remain in a cool, well ventilated environment for 10 minutes before measuring the temperature, to avoid incorrect measurements.
- If any person develops a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher, he or she is required to go home.
- Students and staff members should not return to school until they have complied with CPS's protocol for discontinuing home isolation as defined under Health Measures (5).

5.3 Suspected COVID-19 Case Procedure

In the event there is a suspicion of a person being infected with COVID-19, the teacher, student or staff should be immediately isolated from others until he / she can go home. Hence, it is important that schools establish an isolation room in the event someone is suspected of having the virus and establish a person that will observe the student until he or she is picked up. The General Practitioner should be contacted immediately by the school.

The General Practitioner reports to Collective Prevention Services (CPS) if there is a suspicion for COVID-19. CPS in turn, will contact the school if the need arises. CPS will then guide the school management in how to deal with providing information to parent(s)/caregiver(s) and information to students and teachers. If necessary, other health and sanitation measures will be taken under the supervision of the Collective Prevention Services.

Parents are to be advised to inform the School Manager in the event a student shows COVID-19 symptoms after returning from school.

6 Support for the Vulnerable

The following guidelines addresses the steps that should be taken to care for special needs children and vulnerable students and families:

6.1 Students with Special Needs

School management should develop continuity of learning plans for students with special needs to ensure continued learning in a home environment. Continuity of learning plans for students with special needs should be developed in consultation with specialists from SSSD who support students in an educational setting such as with speech therapists and occupational therapists, as may be necessary. These plans should provide staff and students with activities that are appropriate to the educational setting.

6.2 Vulnerable Students and Families

The Government of St. Maarten, through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is chaired by the Honorable Prime Minister of Sint Maarten, Ms. Silveria Jacobs, has put plans

in place to provide for those in severe need. These plans cover a range of needs including the distribution of boxes with food and sanitary supplies and income support.

Government, through the Division of Inspection ECYS and the Division of Education Innovations of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, has sent out different surveys to assess the accessibility to devices and connectivity to the internet for distance learning. Based on the surveys that were conducted, it was noted that there is still a vast number of students that have difficultly accessing the internet or are without a device.

Educational Institutions should identify all students with demonstrated hardship as verified by the Division of Inspection-OCJS as well as Division of Education Innovation in their surveys. Due to the fact that the identified students may not have access to a computer with properly functioning audio and video or internet, schools should develop strategies to meet the educational needs of these students. This can include, allowing students to utilize computers at school on days when online learning is necessary, the purchasing of devices or repairing of old of devices through Public Private Partnerships. In cases where devices will be obtained and made available to students' schools are urged to develop guidelines for the use, maintenance and accountability for the devices.

7 Psychological Well-being of Students and Personnel

The current pandemic has caused of a lot of stress and fear due to the uncertainty, disruption from familiar routines and the unexpected disengaging from communities of social support. Due to this, it is vital that schools play an important role in proactively providing resources to support the wellbeing of students and staff.

The following guidelines are established to facilitate this necessity:

- Creative activities such as sports, playing, drawing and the creative arts can facilitate this process by allowing children to communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with the Department of Sport, the Department of Culture, the Department of Youth and their collaborators to support the delivery of structural / supplemental programs to their students during the implementation of Approaches 1 – 3 of this plan.
- Emphasize the importance of self-care and healthy coping strategies such as maintain consistent routines, practicing healthy habits such as eating healthy, exercise or meditation, getting enough sleep, taking regular breaks from news and media and making time to unwind.
- Psychological assessment for teachers and students once schools have reopened will be facilitated and coordinated in collaboration with the Student Support Services Division. Having reliable data can facilitate the process of provide psychological care to those in need.

Further guidelines related to the support from Culture, Youth and Sport as it relates to the well-being of students and personnel will be added as addendum to this document.

8 Curriculum

The delivery of education according to Approaches 1 to 3 of the reopening of schools, detailed in this document, is expected to result in a reduction in teacher – student contact hours which will have an impact on the coverage of the curriculum.

Although all subjects within the curriculum are considered to be important, in planning for the delivery of a blended approach to the delivery of education, much consideration must be given to how best to optimize teacher student contact to promote mastery in key subject areas. This is of particular concern for students within Primary and Secondary Education. Institutions providing Advanced Vocational and Higher Education cater to adult learners who have generally completed a basic education and are accustomed to delivering education through blended approaches. As such, only guidelines for the delivery of the Primary and Secondary Education will be detailed in this section.

In planning for the delivery of Curriculum for Primary Education, schools are requested to:

A. Utilize at least 75% of the face-to-face instructional time, in the school environment, to deliver the following core subjects:
    1. Language & Communication (with a focus on literacy in the younger grades & on English and Dutch in schools with Dutch as the language of instruction)
    2. Mathematics
    3. Social Emotional Development
    4. Science & Technology

B. Utilize at least 50% of face to face instructional time, online to deliver the following core subjects:
    1. Dutch
    2. Social Studies
    3. Cultural & Artistic Development
    4. Health

Consideration should be given to primary schools collaborating to facilitate physical education and Cultural & Artistic Development classes, in the districts utilizing community spaces (schools, sports fields, community centers), with collaborators from the Department of Sports (SPORT), Department of Culture (CULTURE) & Department of Youth. Human resources for the delivery of programs could come from the pool of Physical Education, Cultural & Artistic Development, collaborators connected to SPORT, CULTURE & YOUTH as well as volunteers.

In planning for the delivery of Curriculum for the first two years of Secondary Education, schools are requested to:

A. Utilize face-to-face instructional time as efficiently as possible, in the school environment, to deliver the following core subjects (where they apply):
   1. English Language
   2. Mathematics
   3. Dutch Language
   4. Science
   5. Care

B. Utilize face to face instructional time, online to deliver the following core subjects:
   1. Philosophy of life
   2. Cultural & Artistic Development
   3. Social Science
   4. ICT

C. Consideration should be given to secondary schools collaborating to facilitate physical education and Cultural & Artistic Development classes, in the districts utilizing community spaces (schools, sports fields, community centers), with collaborators from the Department of Sports (SPORT), Department of Culture (CULTURE) & Department of Youth. Human resources for the delivery of programs could come from the pool of Physical Education, Cultural & Artistic Development, collaborators connected to SPORT, CULTURE & YOUTH as well as volunteers.

In planning for the delivery of Curriculum for the 3rd through 5th years of Secondary Education, where it applies, schools are requested to:

A. Utilize at least 75% of the face-to-face instructional time, in the school environment, to deliver the following core subjects (where they apply):
   1. English Language
   2. Mathematics
   3. Dutch Language
   4. Science
   5. Practical / Core Examination Program

B. Utilize at least 50% of face to face instructional time, online to deliver the following core subjects:
   1. Care
   2. Cultural & Artistic Development
   3. Social Science
   4. ICT

Consideration should be given to secondary schools collaborating to facilitate physical education and Cultural & Artistic Development classes, in the districts utilizing community spaces (schools, sports fields, community centers), with collaborators from the Department of Sports (SPORT), Department of Culture (CULTURE) & Department of Youth. Human resources for the delivery of programs could come from the pool of Physical Education, Cultural & Artistic Development, collaborators connected to SPORT, CULTURE & YOUTH as well as volunteers.

9 Attachments

1. Professional Development Plan
2. Communication Plan
3. Approaches & Categories Related to transmission of COVID-19
4. Checklist for Reopening of Primary Schools
5. Checklist for Reopening of Secondary Schools
6. Checklist for Review Committee (Primary Schools)
7. Checklist for Review of Committee (Secondary Schools)
8. Scenario A Checklist (8a) and Reporting Form (8b)
9. Scenario B Checklist (9a) and Reporting Form (9b)

MECYS
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, YOUTH AND SPORT
SINT MAARTEN

PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

JULY 1, 2020
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Executive Summary

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has overturned life for everyone. For education professionals, especially teachers, the stress associated with this disease is a result of the many new challenges that they have been faced with. Teachers are struggling with unfamiliar technologies and reinventing lessons while also finding other ways to do familiar things such as grading homework. They are swamped with emails, texts and calls from principals/ school managers, parents and students. They are trying to support students and their families while also juggling the needs of their own children and families and still managing their own COVID-19 fears. In addition, the hurricane season is now here and many teachers, especially those who have experienced the devastation of Hurricane Irma are beginning to feel a heightened sense of concern and anxiety.

Problem Statement

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (ECYS) is aware that when teachers return to their classrooms in August 2020, they will need additional support while trying to engage students as they face three serious bottlenecks.

1) Stress due to economic uncertainty, concern for the safety of loved ones, and anxiety about the future;
2) The overwhelming challenge of returning to schools where many students have fallen behind and the increased pressure on teachers to ensure that students catch-up while learning new pedagogy and adapting curricula to support virtual learning and instruction; and
3) Limited access to the right technologies or the skills to use them.

Proposed Solution

Globally, policy usually directs norms and standards for teacher professional development. Sint Maarten has not yet developed a policy on professional development for teachers. However, in the absence of a structured teacher professional development program, alternatives are required to assist teachers. The Ministry of ECYS would like to support schools in preparing their education professionals during the 2020-2021 academic year. The support will be geared towards teachers, to help them adapt to the educational challenges experienced and expected due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 as well as the current hurricane season. Based on these factors, schools will be advised to set up a professional development plan for education professionals at their schools. The Ministry ECYS has identified 3 key areas, however, schools are at the liberty to include other areas they find fitting based on their needs analysis research.

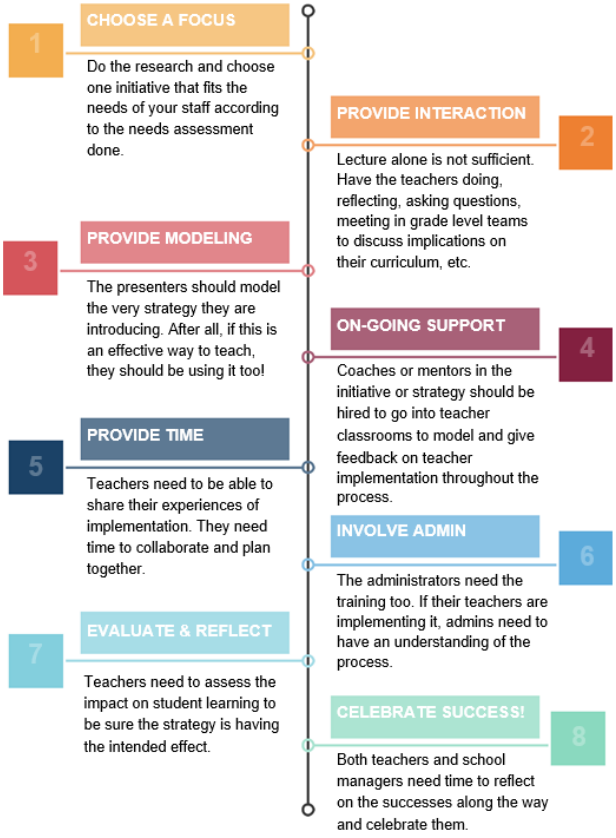
1) Psychosocial support and teacher well-being
2) Support to undertake effective remedial education
3) Technological support

Methodology

Educational institutions customarily provide professional development to their staff as a one-time session in the form of a workshop. Teachers may leave the session excited about what they just learned but within days of being back in the classroom, the enthusiasm diminishes and teachers fall back on what they already know. Teaching and learning are multifaceted tasks and require much more than a workshop to change. As such, a professional development program in such a model may not

impact teaching practices and therefore, may not impact student learning. Some steps[1] for effective professional development is shown in the diagram below: Choose a focus, provide interaction, provide modeling, on-going support, provide time, involve admin, evaluate and reflect and finally, celebrate success.

8 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Source: Educationcloset.com

Professional development for teachers can take place in various settings, so schools can personalize the preferred learning environment for their teachers. Some examples[2] of various forms of professional development are listed below.

1) **Unconference:** Choice of short sessions throughout a single day. The content is provided by the attendees themselves and not outside experts.
2) **Intentional Professional Learning Community (PLC):** Teachers meet in groups they choose, setting goals and keeping each other accountable.
3) **Choice Boards:** Teachers choose from a variety learning activities and modes of study.
4) **Personal Action Plans:** Individual teachers set specific goals, then create and follow a plan to reach them.

[1] Source: https://educationcloset.com/2018/06/01/8-steps-effective-professional-development/

[2] Source: https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/pd/

5) **Voluntary Piloting:** A small group of teachers tries a new initiative, then reports their results to staff.
6) **Peer Observation:** Teachers visit each other's physical or virtual classroom to learn new practices and provide feedback.
7) **Microcredentials:** Teachers earn certificates signed by the Minster of ECYS for completing pre-defined learning challenges or quests.
8) **Blended Learning:** Teachers learn through online resources and come together to share as a group.
9) **Lab Classrooms:** A host teacher models a strategy with students while other teachers observe.

Implementation

School management will need to select key individuals for the train the trainers' workshops. The University of St. Martin (USM) can be engaged to provide professional development for school management as it relates to providing training and/or empowering them in the 8 steps of professional development;

Needs Assessment

In order to develop this Professional Development Plan, a series of activities must be carried out by each school management to identify what capacity development is needed among its education professionals. It should answer the questions on who must be trained, what they must be trained in, and when and where the training will take place. It identifies the current level of competency, skill or knowledge in one or more areas and compares that competency level to the required competency standard established for their current job functions. The difference between the current and required competencies can help determine training needs. Instead of assuming that all employees need training or even the same training, school management can use this instrument to make informed decisions about the best ways to address competency gaps among individual employees, specific job categories or groups.

The Process

The school manager meets with their staff to discuss and document the learning needs. In so doing, the manager is able to assess the learning/training needs of their staff, identify any gaps at the individual, team and school levels. This form can be used to structure the conversations and appropriately document the results and to further determine how it will be evaluated. The table below provides an example of the structure of the learning needs analysis form.

Table 1: Example of Learning needs analysis

Learning needs identified	Expectation of school manager/school	Identified Learning Gaps	How will this be achieved	Dates proposed for activities	How is it going to be evaluated
Psychosocial support and teacher well-being					
Providing effective remedial education					
Technical support					

Learning needs identified: What task or skill does the staff need to know to carry out their role effectively? Has the employee any knowledge on the subject? This could range from having an understanding of a particular subject, to more complex issues that require training, coaching etc.

Expectations of school manager/school: What is necessary for the staff member to know in order to make the school function effectively? Does it meet with the institutional objectives? Is it a realistic and achievable goal?

Identified learning gaps: What is required in order to reach competence in that skill/task?

How will this be achieved: Could there be alternative ways of learning than to send staff member on a course? Also consider self-learning, coaching (See 9 examples in Methodology)

Dates proposed for activities: Should this be weekly or monthly, and specify dates if known. (dates can be adjusted)

How is it going to be evaluated: What processes are in place to ensure that it has been achieved, how is it going to be measured, what are the timelines?

Evaluation

Training evaluation is meant to analyze if professional development programs and initiatives are effective and efficient to facilitate learning. Evaluation is done at the end of every session or in certain cases the end of a semester. Trainers as well as the Ministry ECYS can use training evaluation to assess if the professional development programs are aligned with the ministry's initial goals and objectives. This can be done by using a standard measurement across all schools. The results of the evaluation will be submitted to the Ministry ECYS and will be used to further request continuing training from the Ministry ECYS. An evaluation can be done by:

- Conducting training feedback surveys;
- Interviews and/or observations with random training participants by the Ministry ECYS;
- Evaluation reports.

Conclusion

Professional development is about increasing student achievement. Elevating teaching staff via professional development, will help to strengthen the quality and equity in our schools. The Ministry ECYS is committed to devoting the necessary support to achieve these goals that will produce a generation of flourishing, resilient education professionals and young people. In partnering with school boards, the Ministry ECYS will ensure that there is follow-up training and follow-through in the classroom since learning doesn't end in the training room.