



Federal Government of Somalia

Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education

Draft Strategy Note on COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

22 March 2019

In late 2019, an acute respiratory disease, known as COVID-19, emerged. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a global pandemic and as of 20th March more than 255,943 cases were and 10,496 deaths were reported worldwide. As a result of the escalating situation around COVID-19, the Somali Government has taken several precautionary measures such as stopping all international flights into the country, closing all learning institutions (including schools and universities) and advising against any large public gathers, for two weeks effective from 18th March 2020. As the Government continues to closely monitor the situation, it is important for the education sector partners to come together to mitigate and minimize the impact of the school closure and interrupted student learning, particularly for the most vulnerable students. In addition, there is a lack of clarity on how the COVID-19 situation will develop globally in the world and locally in Somalia, as such it is important for the education sector to start putting in place long-term measures ensuring that students can continue to learn even if schools are closed.

In line with the fluid and developing situation, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education (MOECHE) and its education partners should work on preparedness and mitigation on the basis of two possible scenarios, which are: (a) schools re-opening; and (b) prolonged schools' closure. The MOECHE will pursue the following strategies for the two possible scenarios.

Scenario 1: Schools reopening and resuming normal operations

Once schools reopen, it's vital that measures are put into place to prevent the transmission of the virus at the school level. The MOECHE will work closely with its partners to put the following into place at every school:

- Review/develop school emergency and contingency plans for Covid-19.
- Every school must have access to clean water and soap and the MOECHE will work to ensure this is readily available at all schools' country wide.

- Train teachers, Head teachers CEC and parents in enhanced PSS adopting WHO PFA guidelines, WHO guidelines on how to help children cope with COVID-19 and UNICEF guidelines on how to talk to children about COVID-19.
- Train teachers, CEC and parents to identify COVID-19 symptoms using the adopted WHO guidelines.
- Based on WHO and MoH guidelines, reinforce frequent handwashing, sanitation, rehab of latrines and procure needed supplies.
- Based on WHO guideline, train teachers to implement preventative measures at the school level (e.g. distancing, hand washing, respiratory hygiene etc.
- Provision of clean water and nutritional food for school age children.
- Review school health education policy.
- Establish school health education unit at Federal and FMS levels
- Provide extra support for vulnerable students/teachers who may be unwell or who have disability to in order to reduce stigma and discrimination.
- Flexibility in school policy on attendance and sick leave.
- Accelerate school health education activities and integrate into existing lesson plans.

Scenario two: Schools remaining closed for a prolonged period

The extent and length of the school closures cannot be predicted and could end up for longer periods. Therefore, it is important to prepare for this possibility using the following potential strategies.

- Develop and use of online/e-learning strategies (google education) for delivering the curriculum.
- Prepare and air radio lessons using interactive radio instructions.
- Develop contingency plan for national exams.
- Continuous awareness raising for parents on importance of distance learning.
- Provide child protection/safeguarding and psychosocial support for students through media platforms.
- Review status of curriculum coverage and develop accelerated education strategies based on Covid-19.
- Create awareness on Covid-19 through Media e.g TV, Radio and social media platforms.
- Set up information sharing mechanism/Task Force and coordinate with other stakeholders comprising relevant government institutions, business groups, donors, partners etc.
- Working closely with MoH to set up health referral system for suspected cases.

The above strategies are some of the possibilities that the MOECHE and education partners can explore together. As we face this difficult time, we should work closer together to ensure every child has the opportunity to learn. Thanks for your collaboration and cooperation.