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திகதி) 2021.02.15
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Professor Kapila Perera,
Secretary,
Ministry of Education

Guideline for conducting National examinations during COVID-19 period

This guide is in addition to the “Instructions for selected public activities / work settings for the prevention and control of COVID – 19 / Conducting examinations” issued in May 2020.

This guide specially refers to General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. O/L) examination conducted by Department of Examinations of Ministry of Education.
Also refer: General guidance for the public on COVID-19 prevention.

General measures

1. A National level coordinating centre to be established which will function 24 hours to handle all emergency situations.
2. All activities in schools which require physical presence of students who are exam candidates should be finished **two weeks prior** to the commencement of the G.C.E. O/L examination.

Specific message/Instructions

For the management/organizer of the examination

1. Appoint a responsible officer for each examination center to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place and the instructions are followed.

2. All staff members involving in examination duties should be given an orientation/instructions to be followed on COVID-19 prevention, the relevant personal protection and precautions to be taken; washing hands properly with soap and water; maintaining physical distancing ,correct way of wearing masks and respiratory etiquette (cover mouth and nose with elbow when sneezing/coughing).

3. All staff members involving examination duties and candidates should submit a declaration form emphasizing that they are neither from a home quarantined household nor from a lock down area, with details about name, address and health status.

4. Maintain a data base of all candidates with their name, contact number, address, NIC number, exam center and the list of subjects with the medium that each candidate have applied for.

5. Inform all candidates of the COVID-19 prevention measures that are in place prior to the examination and it should be again communicated at the examination centre through notices / signages.

6(a). All candidates must be given a hotline number for any COVID-19 related queries and to call and inform of any fever / respiratory symptoms beforehand, to allow the necessary arrangements to be made.

6(b). **If a candidate is found positive for COVID-19**, they should be admitted to a designated hospital / treatment center. The hospital Director / Medical Superintendent / Medical Officer In-charge should make necessary arrangements **to prepare a separate place to conduct the examination**. The Education officials should coordinate and support in conducting the exam at the hospital / treatment center.

6(c). **If a candidate is having symptoms suspicious of COVID-19 and hospitalized**, the hospital Director / Medical Superintendent / Medical Officer In-charge should make necessary arrangements **to prepare a separate place within hospital** to conduct the examination.

6(d). If a candidate is quarantined or in a lock down area at the time of examination, a separate examination centre should be arranged to conduct the examination. However, if only a very few candidates are there in the lock down area, the exam could be arranged at the nearest exam centre in a separate building. The admission card of the candidate should be accepted as a gate-pass for the candidate to leave the lock down area only to attend the exam.

6(e). If the candidate, after arrival at the examination center, complains of COVID-19 related symptoms, a quarantine room should be allocated within each center, for the candidate to continue the examination on that particular day. All precautions should be

made to separate the student with signs and symptoms, from others in the hall. All arrangements should be made to ensure that the student completes the examination.

6(f). Education officials should coordinate with other government officers for arranging transport facilities to students in lock down areas and those who are quarantined.

6(g). Examination officers on duty in hospitals / treatment centres / quarantined centres and lock down areas should be provided with protective equipment.

6(h). When conducting the exam at the hospital setting, if required, health staff should be allowed to work as exam invigilators.

7. The process of entering and exit from the examination centre should be streamlined and adequate service points need to be provided to prevent crowding/bottlenecks such as hand washing, registration, bag drop off point, etc.

8. Arrange facilities for hand washing (foot operated or sensor operated tap are preferred) with soap and water for all participants at the entrance to the examination hall. If such facilities cannot be provided, ensure availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer at the entrance. All participants should be advised to clean their hands before entering the examination hall. A teacher / officer should be allocated to ensure that the above process is taking place properly.

9. Adopt a system of inquiring about the health of staff and candidates ask for fever respiratory symptoms at the entrance

10. Thermometers may be used to check for fever but are not essential. If temperature is to be checked at the entrance, non-contact infra-red devices are preferred, and staff must be trained on their proper use.

11. If a staff members involving examination duties develop fever / respiratory symptoms they should not come to work at exam centre. They should inform the chief invigilator, to arrange another person.

12. The exam hall should be disinfected before and after the examination, and between batches if relevant. This includes disinfection of tables, door handles, stair railings, lift buttons and other commonly touched surfaces.

13. When attendance is signed, the students should be asked to use their own pen.

14. A face mask should be worn properly by the candidates and should wear it during the examination as well. Invigilators should wear the mask throughout the process

15. Provide a closed waste bin for discarding used tissue, paper serviettes and used disposable items.

16. Keep the examination hall well ventilated whenever possible. Proper natural ventilation in the hall is preferred. Avoid using A/C as much as possible.

17. Keep all doors leading to the examination hall open before and after the examination to avoid people touching the door-handles

18. There should be a minimum one meter distance between each examination desk.

19. Do not send any stationary/equipment (e.g. log tables/calculators,) around from hand to hand

20. Provide disposable cups at the water dispenser or ask candidates to bring their own water bottles.

21. At intervals, students should not be allowed to mix with each other, share food and drink.

22. For conducting practical / viva voce / interview examinations

22(a). Students should not be sending to high risk areas for practical examinations..

22(b). They should be conducted in such a way as to minimize touching of common surfaces / instruments during the rotation (eg. Questions can be displayed on a monitor instead of on a printed sheet; use of microscope can be avoided by displaying image of the slide on a screen). All instruments must be disinfected between candidates.

22(c) A mask should be worn by both candidates and examiners during viva voce/practical/interview examinations. If the exam procedure cannot be conducted with masks, it is advised to maintain at least two meter of physical distancing and use a well ventilated room.

22(d) Candidates with fever / respiratory symptoms must be instructed to wear the mask at all times and be directed to the isolated area. This should be away from other candidates, preferably in another room. It is preferred to postpone the exam date to a convenient one without making disadvantage to the candidate

For parents / guardians

1. If your child is having symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 such as fever/cough/sore throat during exam period, you should obtain advice from your area Medical Officer of Health.
2. If your child becomes positive for COVID -19 or quarantined should adhere to the instructions of the area Public Health Inspector (PHI)/ Medical officer of Health (MOH).
3. If you are quarantined, and having difficulty in arranging transport to the exam centre for your child, you could inform the Divisional Secretary or the school principal for support.

For the candidates


1. Provide accurate contact details to the school principal /Public Health Inspector Medical Officer of Health.
2. Follow instructions given by the institution/ organization regarding COVID-19 prevention. This includes:
 - Respiratory etiquette (cough or sneeze into the inner side of your elbow)
 - Regularly wash hands properly with soap and water
 - Correctly wearing a mask to cover both the nose and mouth
 - Ensure a distance of at least one meter is maintained at all times between yourself and others
 - Do not crowd at common areas; at entrance, registration desk, hand washing facilities, canteens.
 - Do not eat together or share meals. When you are having meals you should have two meter distance between each other.
 - Bring your own equipment (eg: calculators) if allowed and as far as possible.
 - Do not linger unnecessarily on the premises before and after the examination.
3. Inform the invigilator if the candidate develop symptoms during examination such as fever/cough/sore throat. If the candidate develops symptoms prior to exam, this should be informed early to Medical officer of Health / Public Health Inspector/ school principal, so that suitable arrangements can be made
4. Candidates with fever / respiratory symptoms must be instructed to wear the mask at all times and sit the exam in the isolated room reserved for you.
5. If a student is identified as COVID positive, the student will be transferred to a hospital/treatment center and he/she will be able to sit for the exam at the hospital. Student could take his/her books to the hospital/ treatment center.

Method of instruction

Instructions are to be issued by institutions / organizations to all candidates.

Notices / signages should be put up at the examination centre indicating COVID-19 prevention measures to be taken (wear mask; wash hands before and after travelling; maintain physical distance of at least one meter from others; respiratory etiquette).

The content of this guide has to be communicated to the relevant officers in your ministry /Department



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