



**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

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From

Shri P. K. Mohapatra, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary to Government

To

All Collector & District Magistrate
All Commissioner, Municipal Corporation

Sub: Advisory on Covid prevention in children and in school environment

Madam/Sir,

In view of reports of increasing incidence of Covid 19 cases amongst children during the current pandemics and possibility of future increases as predicted by Public Health experts, the task force constituted by Govt. of Odisha suggested following measures are to be followed to prevent spread of the disease in community with special emphasis in children and also in school environment.

1. COVID Exposed Children

Children of COVID +ve parents need to be isolated as much as possible taking care of the basic needs of the child. In hospital set up, sick babies delivered from the COVID +ve mothers are to be isolated and be kept in New Born Stabilization Unit (NBSU)/ SNCU till the mother becomes non-infectious. Babies born from COVID positive mothers need to be tested on the same day. Neonate found positive and sick need to be admitted to COVID Hospital.

2. Home Care

In case of COVID positive parents in home isolation, the child need to be separated from the infected parents till they become non-infectious and other members of the family are required to take care of these children.

3. Surveillance

Passive and Active Surveillance need to be done regularly for identification and isolation of Covid 19 cases. The principles of trace, test & treat must be followed. All cases with symptoms of ILI/SARI. Will be screened. Parents shall also be sensitized to report the same to the Health Care Workers / Health Care Centres.

4. COVID Appropriate Behaviour

Since it has been observed that many children are getting affected during 2nd wave of pandemic, all children above 2 years may be advised to wear masks before stepping out of their houses. Parents should ensure the same.

5. COVID Orphans (Social responsibility, Adoption)

The State Govt. has issued dedicated helpline 1098, OSCPSR helpline 1800-345-4494 and State Covid helpline 104 for immediate tracking of children below the age of 18 years in vulnerable situations and for keeping them in the Child Care Institutions (CCI) setup by the Department of Women & Child Development. Financial assistance to these CCIs has been ensured by the State Govt.

6. COVID appropriate Nutrition

Continuation of breast feeding by COVID affected mothers and timely initiation of nutrient rich age-appropriate complementary feeding in children is to be ensured.

7. Awareness and Social Behaviour Change Communication

Specialized communication strategy is to be adopted for generating awareness and addressing the government efforts for care of the children age group.

8. Special considerations for school-going children

Deciding to close, partially close or reopen schools should be guided by a risk-based approach, to maximize the educational, well-being and health benefit for students, teachers, staff, and the wider community, and help prevent a new outbreak of COVID-19 in the community.

Several elements should be assessed in deciding to re-open schools or keep them open:

- The epidemiology of COVID-19 at the local level: This may vary from one place to another within the state.
- The likely benefits and risks to children and staff of open schools should be assessed including consideration of:
 - Transmission intensity in the area where the school operates.
 - Overall impact of school closures on education, general health and wellbeing; and on vulnerable and marginalized populations (e.g. girls, displaced or disabled)
 - Effectiveness of remote learning strategies
- The capacity of schools/educational institutions to operate safely
- The schools shall function in collaboration and coordination with local public health authorities.
- The other public health measures like use of masks, practice of hand washing & social distancing are to be encouraged and implemented outside school

- **Community-level measures:** Carry out early detection, testing, contact tracing and quarantine of contacts; investigate clusters; ensure physical distancing, hand and hygiene practices and age-appropriate mask use; shield vulnerable groups. Community-led initiatives such as addressing misleading rumors also play an important role in reducing the risk of infection.
- **Safety and security:** School closure or re-opening may affect the safety and security of students and the most vulnerable children may require special attention, such as during pick-up and drop-off.
- **Hygiene and daily practices at the school and classroom level:** Physical distancing of at least 1 metre between individuals including spacing of desks, frequent hand and respiratory hygiene, age-appropriate mask use, ventilation and environmental cleaning measures should be in place to limit exposure. Schools should educate staff and students on COVID-19 prevention measures, develop a schedule for daily cleaning and disinfection of the school environment, facilities and frequently touched surfaces, and ensure availability of hand hygiene facilities and national/local guidance on the use of masks.

Physical distancing outside and inside the classrooms must be followed as far as possible.

Screening and care of sick students, teachers and other school staff:

Schools should enforce the policy of "staying home if unwell", waive the requirement for a doctor's note, ensure students who have been in contact with a COVID-19 case stay home for 14 days, and consider options for screening on arrival.

Communication with parents and students:

Schools should keep students and parents informed about the measures being implemented to ensure their collaboration and support.

Yours faithfully,


22/05/2021
Additional Chief Secretary to Government