

SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS – A TOP PRIORITY AS SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE REOPEN

By Corporate Communications Division, Ministry of Education

Students, parents and teachers had been getting ready for the much-anticipated return-to-school as the New Year celebrations fizzled out. Schools nationwide reopened their doors in stages beginning on 3 January 2022 as part of the early endemic phase, in which the first stage saw the return of Years 10 to 13 students, including special needs students of priority levels 1 and 2 physically to school.

Concurrently, unvaccinated students and students below 12 years old will resume online learning at home. Teachers also provide a Home Learning Pack (HLP) to ensure students who do not have access to online learning will not be missing their education.

Comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) & Guidelines

While students and teachers adapt to the new normal, their safety in schools amid the pandemic is paramount. Hence, in addition to schools' existing Business Continuity Plan (BCP), comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines have been put in place in schools that include a once-a-week Antigen Rapid Test (ART) for all members of the school community comprising of students, teachers and non-teaching staff who have completed two doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

These comprehensive SOPs and guidelines are also crucial to raise awareness among students and teachers on the importance of social distancing, classroom seating arrangements, wearing mask and hand sanitiser, as well as temperature check upon entering school premises.



Teaching and learning session in progress physically at Sekolah Menengah Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha

“According to Principal Hajah Adimah binti Haji Mohd Said from Sekolah Menengah Muda Hashim, “Parents were already informed on the SOPs and guidelines for Years 10-11 students through a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams and infographics with instructions were also sent through WhatsApp platform. For everyone’s safety, it is compulsory for students to wear face masks at all times, wash or sanitise their hands frequently and keep social distancing, while at school.”

“Teachers also help guide the students on how to perform the ART procedures at the school hall. Most students have never tried the test before, therefore, a video on the ART demonstration was played for them to understand better and be able to do the test with confidence,” she added.

Cikgu Irene Chee Siew Ling from Sekolah Menengah Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha said, “In ensuring students’ safety at school, firstly, their BruHealth code must be green and their body temperature must not exceed 37°C. As a weekly addition, on every Monday, upon arrival at school, they are required to go straight to the school hall to undergo ART.”

“Students who are sick or tested positive on the ART will be sent home immediately and parents are advised to bring their child to get PCR swab test. While waiting for their parents to pick them up, they will be isolated in a designated area, away from the others as a safety precaution,” Cikgu Irene added.

Cikgu Irene also shared that for students who would like to buy food at the school canteen during break time, they are required to pre-order their food early in the morning during class registration. She said, “Only two students in each class are allowed to collect their food during break time so that crowding in the canteen can be avoided.”



Photo shows a student sanitising his hands after undergoing temperature check upon entering school premises

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Photos show teachers guiding students on how to do ART procedures at Sekolah Menengah Lambak Kiri

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Schools are Safe Space for Learning

As safety measures and guidelines are being implemented at schools, parents and students can be rest assured that teaching and learning sessions are conducted in a safe environment.

Nur Niqmah binti Kahar, a Year 11 student from Sekolah Menengah Sayyidina Abu Bakar, felt excited the moment she stepped into the school hall after months of school closure, seeing familiar faces even though they were covered by face masks. She said, "On the first day of school, the guidelines for entry to the school premises are clear and organised. I feel safe and ready to start learning physically at school. I will always follow the school guidelines to make sure my friends and I as well as the people around me are safe."

Dayang Hajah Siti Mayang binti Haji Hussin, a parent said, "I have my confidence in the current SOPs and guidelines implemented by the Ministry of Education. Schools now have become safe spaces for students to continue learning face-to-face."

"I hope all parents and students do their part in keeping the school community safe by following the SOPs, wearing face masks, practising social distancing and maintaining hygiene and cleanliness," she added.

Another parent Awang Ismail bin Haji Chuchu welcomed the Ministry of Education's decision to reopen the schools or institutions physically in stages. He said, "With face-to-face learning, students can completely focus on their studies especially when they can interact with their teachers spontaneously."

With the comprehensive SOPs and guidelines providing all-round directions to facilitate the school reopening for students, teachers and parents, it is hoped that the second phase, which is expected to begin on 17 January 2022, will be conducted smoothly, as we welcome the return of Years 7 to 9 students back to schools safely.

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Students practising social distancing prior to temperature check upon entering Sekolah Tinggi Perempuan Raja Isteri



Safe seats arrangements for ART are ensured in schools to adhere to social distancing practice