



COVID-19 - Standards for English Language Teaching Schools

Applicability

The obligatory conditions in these Standards are issued under the Public Health Act CAP 465 and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in enforcement procedures as provided by the Act. These standards apply for all English Language Teaching and similar Schools operating in Malta and Gozo, as regulated by the ELC Council Regulations, LN221 of 2015.

Exemption to operate school

From the 14th July 2021, by order of Legal Notice 299 of 2021 of the Public Health Act (CAP. 465), Closure of English Language Teaching Schools Order, 2021, English Language Schools were ordered to cease operations. Subsequently, an exemption has been instituted by virtue of Legal Notice 314 of 2021, PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, (CAP. 465), Closure of English Language Teaching Schools (Amendment) Order, and reflected in these Standards, wherein, from the 26th July 2021, English Language Schools may operate and **ONLY** accept students who:

1. are already in Malta as of Monday 26th July 2021 and as of 2nd August 2021 for those students who were already booked as of the 26th July 2021

AND

2. are fully vaccinated with a valid vaccination certificate, as per below definition

No new bookings will be taken until 15th August 2021. Advertising/promotional campaigns will re-commence from the 16th August 2021 onwards.

A recognised vaccination certificate is a certificate authorised by the national regulatory authority of the administering country, that are authorized with 14 days after the last dose, utilising only vaccines approved by the European Medicines Authority ((Comirnaty [Pfizer], Janssen [Johnson & Johnson], Spikevax [Moderna], Vaxzevria [AstraZeneca]). The following COVID Vaccine certificates are currently recognised:

- Official Maltese vaccination certificate.
- An EU Digital COVID vaccination certificate, issued by EU, EEA and non-EU countries connected to the EUDCC gateway.
- United Kingdom NHS (paper or digital) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccination Certificate
- UAE Vaccine Certificate issued by the Dubai Health Authorities with readable QR Code
- Turkish Vaccine certificate of full course of vaccination
- USA CDC record card. As of the 1st August 2021, the USA CDC record card will need to be verified through Verify in order to be accepted as a valid vaccination certificate.
- Serbian “Digital Green Certificate” with a readable QR Code
- Gibraltar, Jersey and Guernsey vaccination certificate

Schools have to verify certificates using an App that will be made available by Health Authorities (to receive credentials for this App, Schools are to send an email to iccertifikavaccin@gov.mt, with subject line in email: English language schools.

Hence, for the purposes of clarity, face to face teaching is only allowed for vaccinated students already on the island as per above definitions and certification procedures. No new bookings, arrivals, intakes can be processed by any School at this stage, irrespective of whether the potential incoming arrivals are vaccinated or not. The schools closure notice is still in force and an exemption is solely being granted for vaccinated students already in Malta.

The Licence to operate will be revoked for ELT operators found in breach of these Standards.

Risk Assessment

Due to the nature of the operations and activities surrounding English Language Teaching (ELT) Schools and their clients/students, ELT Schools have been classified as extremely high risk for the transmission of COVID-19. Hence, for this reason, the standards outlined in this document need to be strictly adhered to.

These standards have been developed in the context of the current available evidence and contextualized to the current epidemiological situation. These standards will be revised according to changing epidemiological context and evidence. Public Health reserves the right to take any public health action necessary to contain the spread of infection and break chains of transmission.

Understanding how COVID-19 spreads and the implications for ELTS

The virus which causes COVID-19 disease can be spread through droplets from a sick person or on contact (by touch). Viral particles may also remain suspended in the air (aerosols). COVID-19 disease often presents with coughing or sneezing which release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets can fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, machinery, equipment, floors, walls, clothes, or telephones. People can catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. By being less than two metres away from a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time, one can catch the disease by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. One can also inhale aerosolized viral particles if one occupies in the same room as a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time, even if a distance of more than two metres is maintained at all times.

In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. The most common symptoms of coronavirus include cough, fever, shortness of breath, tiredness, sore throat, runny / blocked

nose, headache, muscle pain, loss of smell, loss of taste, diarrhoea, or vomiting. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

Persons who develop any of these symptoms, even if mild, are to stay at home and book a swab test. Tests can be booked online through <https://covidtest.gov.mt/> or by calling the Covid-19 Helpline on 111 or (+356) 21324086. For more information, seek guidance on www.covid19health.gov.mt. Should symptoms persist or worsen, they should contact their doctor.

Guidance on the use of medical or cloth masks or visors

Legal Notice 402 of 2020 prescribes that persons shall wear a mask or visor in a proper manner covering the nose, mouth, and chin of the person outside their residence, both when going to an indoor place and outdoors. The mandatory use of medical or cloth masks or visors also applies to ELT Schools.

All staff and students shall use medical or cloth masks or visors at all times. Among other considerations, it should be noted that the type of protective face covering worn has a substantial bearing on the risk assessment carried out during contact tracing. **Masks (or masks together with visors) are strongly recommended as compared to visors alone.** Masks or visors are to be invariably worn on entering or exiting ELT Schools and in all areas within the ELT Schools premises. For further information, refer to the *Standards on the Use of Face Masks or Visors/Face Shields in the Community for decreasing COVID-19 Transmission* [1]

COVID Alert Malta

All staff and students of English Language Teaching Schools should install the COVID Alert Malta application from Google Play or Apple's App Store prior to their arrival in Malta. This should be a condition of enrolment specified in the contract signed by each student. Continued use of the COVID Alert Malta application throughout the students' stay in Malta will help facilitate the contact tracing process in case they develop COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19. Instructions for downloading the application can be found at <https://covidalert.gov.mt>.

Mitigation Plan

Each ELT School should have a COVID-19 mitigating plan specific for its needs and layout, based on the legal regulations as per L.N. 221 of 2015 and based on these standards. This should comprise a plan of action indicating how the ELT School intends to implement these standards. All necessary safety procedures have to be implemented by the ELT School according to their specific setup and situation.

COVID-19 Liaison Officer

All ELT Schools in Malta are required to assign a senior member of staff the role of **COVID-19 Liaison Officer**. The COVID-19 Liaison officer will be responsible for ensuring that he/she keeps abreast with all policies and procedures issued by the Public Health authorities, and act as the contact focal point with Public Health. The Officer will ensure that all mitigation measures indicated are implemented and adhered to, and will liaise with the Contact Tracing Team to implement the required contact tracing protocols as directed by Public Health. A detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the COVID-19 Liaison Officer is provided in this document. Training on the roles and responsibilities of the COVID-19 Liaison Officer will also be provided.

These guidelines are meant to mitigate, as much as possible, against the transmission of COVID-19. Although the risk of infection is reduced, it can never be completely eliminated. Clients need to understand that a risk of transmission will still exist even if these guidelines are rigorously followed and implemented.

General Conditions

- a) For the purpose of these standards and for the mitigation of COVID-19 through appropriate public health measures, each ELT School assumes responsibility of students who are minors assigned to it, for the whole duration of their stay in Malta and for all in-school and organized extra-curricular activities.
- b) Temperature screening should take place at the entry to the premises for staff and students alike. Any person with a screening temperature of $>37.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ should be refused entry.
- c) Anyone who is unwell should not attend for lessons or group activities and enabling a virtual learning modality for those who cannot attend would support this measure
- d) The School must regulate entrance into and exit from the premises, adopting crowd management techniques with visible markings where possible, as per the procedures outlined in these standards.
- e) The School must keep a list and contact details (name and contact number) of all people accessing the premises for 28 days (students, staff, suppliers, maintenance, cleaners, etc.).
- f) There are to be no large gatherings or assemblies inside or outside the school.
- g) Use of shared social spaces or common rooms should be avoided.
- h)** The maximum student capacity in a classroom is to be based on a minimum distance of 1.5 metres between students whilst sitting in their chair. It is strongly recommended that maximum efforts should be made to maintain an adequate physical distance of 2 metres so far as possible. The greater the distance, the safer it is for students and the lower the risk of viral spread. For risk assessment purposes during contact tracing, a minimum distance of 2 metres is taken into account.
- i) All students and all staff are required to always wear a face mask and/or visor at all times.
- j) Students should be kept within their same bubble as much as is possible, both in the class during lessons and outside the class during extra-curricular and social activities organized by the school [2]. Mixing of bubbles across ELT Schools (i.e. activities where students from different ELT Schools meet at a particular venue) is not permitted.

- k) The '*Standards for Transport Service Providers and for Passengers using Transport Services*' are to be followed for organized activities requiring transport [3].
- l) It is advised that tutors do not walk around the classroom during a lesson but remain in their allocated position and maintain at least 2 metres' distance from the front row, as much as possible.
- m) Daily attendance of students should be taken for each classroom/group and capacity monitoring should be done through regular daily checks. Seating plans for each lesson are required.
- n) The School must provide ongoing cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common areas and classrooms inside the premises [4]. Cleaning and disinfection regimes must be documented.
- o) Any food or drink outlets in ELT Schools shall adhere to all Standards issued by the MTA and Public Health Authorities and all relevant legislation, including Closure of Food and Drink Outlets Regulations 2021 and all subsequent amendments to said Regulations.

Conditions of enrolment

The points below should be clearly communicated to ELT School students, families of students, visiting staff members and host families prior to signing any contract with an ELT School, and included in the conditions of enrolment document supplied by the school:

- 1) All visitors to and residents of Malta are subject to the laws of Malta.
- 2) Currently, the duration of mandatory quarantine in Malta is 14 days, irrespective of vaccination status or previous infection.
- 3) A student may be placed in quarantine for 14 days because:
 - a. S/he results positive for Covid-19
 - b. S/he is deemed to be a close contact of a positive case of COVID-19 following a risk assessment carried out by the Contact Tracing team.
 - c. S/he is a secondary contact (e.g., the student lives in the same residence as someone who is found to be a close contact of a positive case). Therefore, for the avoidance of doubt, *direct exposure to the positive case is not a pre-requisite for quarantine.*
- 4) Therefore, students should understand that they may be required to spend unplanned additional days in Malta if they are issued with a notice of mandatory quarantine.
- 5) If a positive case of COVID-19 is identified in a school and contact tracing procedures commence, students and staff are obliged to cooperate with Public Health authorities and answer their phone from Monday to Sunday, including public holidays, during contact tracing hours.
- 6) Whilst the full cooperation of the students is expected and required, it must be made clear that if students do not cooperate and abide by these standards or do not provide all the information requested to the Public Health Authorities, their status as an English Language student may be terminated
- 7) Environmental Health Officers are empowered to inspect the address of quarantine of people placed in mandatory quarantine by Public Health to ensure adherence to legislation. In the case of shared accommodation, letters of quarantine will be issued with the room number and the names of the individual(s) expected to be in that particular room for the duration of quarantine.

- 8) Quarantined students will be fined in accordance with the laws of Malta if they are not found in their stated address of quarantine. If additional people are unexpectedly found in a room where someone is in quarantine, they will also be placed in quarantine for 14 days starting from the date that Environmental Health Officers identified the additional people.
- 9) Students are expected to install and continually use the COVID Alert Malta application throughout their stay in Malta.

Duties and Responsibilities of the COVID-19 Liaison Officer

The Covid-19 Liaison Officer appointed by the school will be central to contact tracing efforts should the need arise. The Officer is responsible for:

- 1) maintaining easily accessible updated records of all students and staff at the ELT School, including:
 - i. name and surname
 - ii. passport number/ID number
 - iii. residing address (including new address if the student is moved for quarantine purposes)
 - iv. verified contact number and email address for each student and member of staff
 - v. vaccination status of each student
 - vi. name and surname of any household members/any other students living in the same address
- 2) keeping records of **seating plans** that outline the relative positions of students and staff during on-site lessons, and for organized transport (e.g. on coaches, vans etc.)
- 3) providing detailed information on extra-curricular activities organized by the school, including student bubbles and any known breaches of social distancing measures.

All data above should be **immediately** accessible and available at all times¹, irrespective of whether courses are being held online or in-person.

The Liaison Officer must be willing to facilitate communication with students who do not speak English and do not understand what the contact tracing team is telling them. The officer should therefore be ready to mediate and translate/communicate instructions to the student.

S/he is also responsible for ensuring all students and staff have the COVID-19 Alert Malta application installed, and for the coordination of surveillance testing.

¹ The Contact Tracing team may require these data for risk assessment purposes from Monday to Sunday, including public holidays, during contact tracing hours. Therefore, the Liaison Officer must be available and responsive to phone calls from the Contact Tracing team during these hours should the need arise.

Testing of students for COVID-19

In order to ensure as safe an environment as possible for schools, students, staff and host families, it is recommended that all English Language Teaching school students are offered testing for COVID-19 by Rapid Antigen Test:

1. Between day 5 and 10 after their arrival
2. Every 2 weeks thereafter for the whole duration of their stay in Malta

The public health authorities will consider facilitating this process if properly and centrally organized by the ELT Council or FELTOM.

It should however be noted that such surveillance testing **excludes** the swab test required for students to board their return flights to their country of origin.

Structural precautions

Proper indoor ventilation is essential. In order to ensure adequate circulation of air, and to reduce the level of pathogens in the air, windows should be remained open throughout the day to allow for cross ventilation. Ventilation and air-conditioning systems should be used in accordance with the guidelines issued by Public Health [5]. Filters should always be cleaned well and maintained properly.

All precautions must be taken to ensure that water systems are safe to prevent the risk of infections derived from water such as Legionnaire's disease. If the water supply is direct from the mains, flushing of the water system by opening all taps for a few minutes should suffice. If the supply of water is through a roof tank, the roof tank should be emptied and cleaned and when the tank is re-filled the entire water system is flushed through for a few minutes. It is important that the water heater temperature is raised to 60°C. In this case, there is no need to take samples and get approval from the Environmental Health Directorate. If the centre forms part of a larger complex or building and the water supply is through the complex or

building main water system, please follow the procedure indicated in Annex 1. You may consult with the Directorate of Environmental Health for further information and advice².

² mhi@gov.mt ; Tel: 21337333

General Guidelines- Reception and Administration

- a) The maximum number of students allowed on the premises and in each classroom should be exhibited at the entrance of the school and of each classroom.
- b) A physical distance of 2 metres between persons should be kept at all times and unessential physical contact of any nature should be avoided.
- c) The School must exercise the right of refusal of entry onto the premises of patrons if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms. Any staff member or student exhibiting signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID should be refused entry
- d) Temperature screening of students and staff should take place at the entrance; anyone with a fever of 37.2°C or more should not be allowed on school premises.
- e) The School shall provide adequate and easily accessible containers with an appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub at the entrance of the premises and outside each classroom and at strategic points throughout the school and ensure that all persons sanitise their hands on entry and exit.
- f) An isolation room is required for any student who is unwell to isolate in until he/she can be accompanied out of the school. Appropriate means of transportation should be provided to the student to ensure that nobody is needlessly placed at risk of exposure (e.g. driver; other passengers)
- g) Acrylic or tempered glass barriers need to be installed in reception area and at sinks within toilet areas or at any other location where an appropriate physical distance cannot be maintained. This barrier needs to be installed at a 2 metre height in places where it is necessary.
- h) Common areas should be organized in such a way to only allow a one-way flow of staff and students.
- i) Visible signage regarding cough etiquette, maintaining an adequate physical distance from others and appropriate hand washing techniques should be available in public areas for all to see. In order to avoid crowding of students, electronic means of sorting out administrative queries, booking and payment should be encouraged.
- j) It is recommended that class times and break times are staggered, in order for arrival and departure of different groups to be planned and therefore avoid crowding of students.

- k) Toilets should have the hand driers disconnected in order to avoid dispersion of viral particles. Disposable paper towels should be supplied instead.
- l) It is recommended that staff work in rosters where they are assigned to the same group/s of students as much as possible. Staff should not be permitted to work in more than one ELT school.

Classrooms

- a) A minimum required physical distance of 1.5 metres is to be maintained at all times in all directions whilst sitting in their chair. It is strongly recommended that maximum efforts should be made to maintain an adequate physical distance of 2 metres so far as possible. The greater the distance, the safer it is for students and the lower the risk of viral spread. For risk assessment purposes during contact tracing, a minimum distance of 2 metres is taken into account.
- b) Students should all face in the same direction. They should not face each other.
- c) During the lessons it is very important that no unnecessary contact between students or between students and staff members takes place.
- d) Tutors/Teachers should not walk around the classroom during a lesson but remain in their allocated position and maintain at least 2 metres distance from the front row, as much as possible.
- e) Timing and schedule of lessons should be such that, where possible, the same group of students would always have lessons and break times together with no mixing or shuffling between groups. This concept of ensuring bubbles within and outside of the classroom is extremely important to implement and maintain.
- f) Ideally those students who reside together are also placed in the class together in order to avoid unnecessary mixing between different groups. This applies to both classroom activities as well as extra-curricular activities which take place after school hours.
- g) It must be pointed out that the more one can restrict the circle of contacts of each individual to a circumspect group at all times, **both during lessons and outside the school**, the lower the number of persons who would need to be quarantined should there be a person positive for COVID-19 within the group.
- h) Wherever possible, the use of outdoor spaces is preferred over indoors.
- i) It is important to note that installation of barriers between students in class has no bearing on potential airborne transmission.

Common Areas/ Restaurants

Shared social spaces or rooms (e.g. canteens, staff rooms and student rooms) should only be used by students or staff from the same bubble at any one point in time. The appropriate social distancing measures should be observed, and adequate contact tracing records need to be kept. These rooms then need to be cleaned appropriately prior to being used by another group. In the case of a library, since evidence has shown that coronavirus can survive on surfaces from a few hours to a few days, it would be advisable not to allow lending of books outside the library.

If the common room includes a computer room, then the shared computer equipment should be cleaned and disinfected using an appropriate agent. Computers are to be placed at a distance of at least 2 metres away from each other. It is important to note that installation of barriers between computers has no bearing on potential airborne transmission.

Food or drink outlets in ELT Schools shall adhere to all Standards issued by the MTA and Public Health Authorities and all relevant legislation, including the 'Closure of Food and Drink Outlets Regulations 2021' and all subsequent amendments to said Regulations.

Cleaning

In general, the infectivity of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces (such as wood, metal, fabrics and plastic) decreases rapidly depending on the material and environmental conditions such as temperature, humidity and UV radiation. The cleaning of surfaces remains an important measure to ensure hygienic conditions.

Premises and resources will be sanitised daily using approved products. A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus. Both cleaning and disinfection is most effective, using a combination of household detergents and disinfectants. A detergent is designed to break up oil and grease with the use of water. Anything labelled as a detergent will work. Cleaning should start with the cleanest surface first, progressively moving towards the dirtiest surface. When surfaces are cleaned, they should be left as dry as possible to reduce the risk of slips and falls, as well as spreading of viruses and bacteria through droplets. Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces.

It is important to clean before disinfecting because dirt and grime can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. Disinfectants containing $\geq 70\%$ alcohol, ammonium compounds, chlorine bleach or oxygen bleach are suitable for use on hard surfaces (surfaces where liquids pool, and do not soak in). The packaging or manufacturer's instructions will outline the correct way to use disinfectant. Disinfectants require time to be effective at killing viruses. If no time is specified, the disinfectant should be left for ten minutes before removing.

Toilets must be cleaned regularly, at least three times a day. Toilet seats, fittings, washbasins and floors must be cleaned. In case of contamination with faeces, blood or vomit, prophylactic wipe disinfection is required after removal of the contamination with a disposable cloth soaked in disinfectant. Protective gloves and mouth and nose protection must be worn by members of staff.

The following areas should be cleaned particularly thoroughly and, if possible, several times a day in heavily frequented areas:

- Door handles and any other handles on drawers, windows, etc.
- Stairs and handrails,

- Light switches,
- Tables, phones,
- Reception desks
- and all other grip areas.

For more information, refer to the 'Cleaning and disinfection of non-hospital settings after confirmed COVID-19 positive case/cases' guidance [4].

Extra-curricular activities

- a) The school retains responsibility for students who are minors (aged less than 18 years) even outside normal school hours. This includes any extra-curricular or social activities carried out outside normal school hours.
- b) Students who are minors will only be allowed to socialize and mix within their normal class bubble. These precautions are also applicable to any extra-curricular or social activities in which students participate and are also strongly recommended for adult students.
- c) The COVID-19 Liaison Officer should be in a position of identifying close contacts of any student, even after school hours. This should include both those contacts with whom the individual had close contact during the day and also the household contacts referring to those persons with whom he/she shares living quarters.

Protocol regarding suspicion of ill student

Procedures in accordance with public health authorities' guidance are to be implemented if:

Scenario A: Fever at screening

Any member of staff or student is found to have fever over 37.2°C or other symptoms when trying to attend the School. In such situations, the staff member/student would be refused entry to the premises and advised to return home. Plans for safe transportation to the student's lodging should be made (i.e., without exposing the driver or other students to potential contamination and risk of being placed in quarantine). Disinfect any rooms where the sick individual spent time while symptomatic.

If symptoms are suggestive of COVID-19, then they are strongly advised to call 111 to get tested. They should remain home until symptoms have completely resolved, even if the swab test does not detect COVID-19.

Scenario B: Any member of staff or student develops fever or other symptoms on school premises.

The person who develops any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 would need to isolate him/herself and leave the school premises as quickly as possible without exposing other individuals. A designated **isolation room** needs to be identified for this purpose, and plans for safe transportation to the student's lodging made (i.e. without exposing the driver or other students to potential contamination and risk of being placed in quarantine). Staff and students who have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 are strongly advised to call 111 and arrange for testing. Disinfect any rooms where the sick individual spent time while symptomatic.

In the case of a potential COVID-19 infection, the School is to inform the Public Health authorities.

If COVID-19 is **confirmed** in a student or staff member, the School will be contacted by Public Health and direction will be provided:

- The COVID Liaison Officer will assist Public Health in contact tracing procedures.

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
- Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect or the longest you possibly can.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, and common areas using protective personal equipment
- Ensure that high touch areas are also thoroughly cleaned with the correct agents for cleaning and disinfection.
- Vacuum the space, ideally using a vacuum with a HEPA filter. Turn off fans/ air circulation whilst cleaning to ensure that potentially infected particles do not circulate throughout the facility.
- If 7 days have elapsed from when the sick person visited the facility, there is no need for enhanced cleaning over the routine cleaning and disinfection.

Host Families

Families hosting English Language students need to be made aware that they may encounter any of the following situations, as per current quarantine protocols.

1. The student they are hosting results positive for Covid-19:

In this case the host family is considered to be part of the same household as a person who resulted positive, even if the student spends most of his/her time in his/her bedroom or out socializing. They will be considered to be primary contacts, and will therefore be placed in mandatory quarantine. This applies to all the host family members. Should the school provide alternative accommodation for the student to reside in during quarantine, the host family members **will still** need to quarantine for 14 days from when the positive case left the household.

2. The student they are hosting is identified as a high-risk contact of a positive person and therefore needs to quarantine:

As per current protocols, the host family would be considered to be secondary contacts, and will therefore have to quarantine for the same period of time as the student they are hosting. Should the school provide alternative accommodation for the student to reside in during quarantine, the host family may be exempt from quarantine **ONLY** if the student's last day of contact with the positive person was within 3 days from when contact tracing is being carried out.

Before accepting to host students, host families should be aware of and informed about quarantine situation and protocols, including the risk of being placed in quarantine. All host families will be provided with guidelines on what is required if they are residing with a student who is positive or identified as a high risk contact.

Alternative Accommodation

It is expected that the English Language school would provide or facilitate the provision of alternative accommodation to students if so required, in the eventuality that quarantine is mandated. The School also needs to ensure that proper quarantine procedures are observed – i.e. students cannot mix with other quarantined students in common areas but are to remain isolated within their own rooms. Ideally, they should have separate bathroom facilities and be provided with meals within their own room.

It must be pointed out that some students may be minors and thus proper supervision needs to be provided.

Annex 1

Note: This annex applies only to those ELT Schools which are part of a complex, or when the building has not been in use for more than 4 weeks. Consult with Directorate of Environmental Health for further information and advice.

The following are the legal requirements to be carried out on the water systems prior to re-opening of the premises:

1. Carry out a full system disinfection of the cold-water system, flushing through to all outlets to achieve 50 mg/l free chlorine for at least an hour checking that this level is achieved at the furthest outlets. This may be also achieved by making uses e.g. 5 mg/l for 10 hours (this all depends on the water piping system condition). It is important to top up when required throughout this process;
2. Flush out and refill the system to achieve maximum normal operating target levels of disinfection (equivalent to at least 0.2 mg/l free chlorine);
3. Refill and carry out a thermal shock by raising the temperature of the whole of the contents of the hot water storage heater from 70°C to 80°C then circulating this water throughout the system for up to three days. To be effective, the capacity and temperature of the hot water storage heater should be sufficient to ensure that the temperatures at the taps and appliances do not fall below 65°C. Each tap and appliance should be run sequentially for at least five minutes at the full temperature, taking appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of scalding;
4. Monitor temperatures and biocide levels where applicable, adjust where necessary, for at least 48-72 hours and then take Legionella samples from sentinel outlets (microbiological samples taken before 48 hours following disinfection may give false negative results);
5. Ensure you keep all documentation for inspection by the Competent Authority, including the review and update of the risk assessment manual including monitoring data, etc., with evidence of who carried out the monitoring, add time, date and signature;

6. Laboratory results for Legionella analysis which have to be carried out at an accredited laboratory, together with all the necessary documentation referred to in point 5 above and a declaration from the private water consultant under whom this water system treatment has been carried out are to be sent to the Water Regulatory and Auditing Unit within the Environmental Health Directorate prior reopening of the establishment;

7. Once it is found that your systems of the hot and cold water are under control then the establishment can reopen.

Bibliography

- [1] Office of the Superintendent of Public Health, "Standards on the Use of Face Masks or Visors/Face Shields in the Community for decreasing Covid-19 transmission," October 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards%20-%20Use%20of%20Face%20Masks%20and%20Visors%20.pdf>.
- [2] Office of the Superintendent of Public Health, "Mandatory Standards for Sports Activities," May 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Mandatory%20Standards%20for%20Sport%20Activities.pdf>.
- [3] Office of the Superintendent of Public Health, "Standards for Transport Service Providers and for Passengers using Transport Services," April 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards%20for%20Passenger%20Transport%20Services.pdf>.
- [4] Office of the Superintendent of Public Health, "Cleaning and disinfection of non-hospital settings after confirmed COVID-19 positive case/cases," 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Cleaning%20and%20disinfection%20of%20non-hospital%20settings%20after%20confirmed%20COVID-19%20positive%20case.pdf>.
- [5] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, "Guidance Document on Air Conditioning and Risk Reduction of COVID 19 Transmission," 2020. [Online]. Available: https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf.