

## Ensuring safety & precautions during and post COVID-19 pandemic

**Coronavirus** can spread through the eyes, nose and mouth and cause mild to severe respiratory illness symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath which can show up 2 to 14 days after a person is exposed. People with severe infections can develop pneumonia and die from complications of the illness. Limiting eye exposure can help. Here's why:

- When a sick person coughs or talks, virus particles can spray from their mouth or nose into another person's face. One is most likely to inhale these droplets through mouth or nose, but they can also enter through eyes.
- One can also become infected by touching something that has the virus on it like a table or doorknob, and then touching his/her face, nose, mouth and eyes.

**Scope** – In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that safety of staff, children, teachers and other stakeholders are maintained and certain guidelines are followed as precautionary measures to protect oneself and others from any possible infection. Given this situation, guidelines for screening and treatment have been developed.

### Key stakeholders

The document is useful for the following stakeholders (and to others too) during any school eye health examination, teacher's training and also spectacle distribution activity.

- *Service providers:* Optometrist, primary screening staff, Counselor, Coordinator and teachers involved in screening
- *Beneficiaries:* students, school teachers and staff
- *Others:* parents (during counselling etc), project coordinator on monitoring visits and all others.



**Training on self-care and personal protection:** The school screening team/staff members would be given rigorous training before school screening activity commences and then continuous training at least once in a week to keep reminding staff the standard protocol and the periodical update of them to be brought to the knowledge of all

Before screening, ask the following 4 questions: (as per Government guidelines)

- Domestic travel in last 4 weeks especially in hot spot or other than green zone?
- In quarantine period? (See stamp on hand or arm)
- In isolation as some in family was COVID-19 positive or had contact with COVID-19 positive patient.
- Do they have fever (more than 99° F (37.2°C), cough, cold, loss of smell?

Staff could be asked to remember the basic questions to ask and symptoms to watch out for by remembering **PQrST** (Positive, Quarantine, Symptoms, Travel) and **Fools** (Fever, Cold, Cough, Loss of Smell)

If answer is 'Yes' to any of these 4, the child must not be screened. The students along with their parents can be referred to the nearest COVID-19 designated centre for evaluation as per government guidelines and also inform the class teacher for counselling and referral to a physician. These are applicable to the physician, care giver, screening team and hospital staff as well.

### **School screening team and their workplace**

- Project Implementation team members to be trained about the modes of transmission and common myths/ misconceptions about COVID-19.
- Project team to be trained on usage and importance of PPE usage (Hand washing, Gloves, Visors & Masks) and its proper disposal.

### **Before Screening:**

- A big and proper ventilated hall should be used for the school screening so that proper physical distancing can be maintained.
- Schools should be informed to clean the hall with 1% Sodium Hypochlorite solution or Lysol where the screening will be conducted.
- Sterilising/cleaning all the tables and chairs which will be used in the school screening. Marking should be done in the hall with one-meter distance so that the students can stand/sit accordingly maintaining the physical distancing to avoid any spread.
- School teachers need to inform the team members if any student is having fever, cough or not feeling well on the day of screening.
- Hand sanitiser should be kept for the use of the team (before and after screening) and for the students who are coming inside the hall for screening.
- The students can be provided with masks, wherever possible - for better safety. (Students to be told in advance through teachers/school to get a face mask / handkerchief to cover their mouth and nose).
- The Programme Coordinator to ensure that the physical distancing of 1 meter is followed during the entire screening process.



### **During Screening:**

- Before registration the school authorities to collect the basic health history of the students about cough, fever, loss of smell, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties and any family history of travel abroad, or whether they were quarantined recently.
- Registration can be done in the classroom wherein the student will be filling the form with the assistance of the teacher or senior students to avoid chaos and noise.
- Strictly have only 20 students in the screening hall (based on completion of the next lot of students to be called) - this will also help in maintaining physical distancing.
- All students need to wear mask compulsorily during the screening.
- Ask the students not to touch any of the equipment during and after the screening.
- Maintaining a distance with the children while screening.
- Do ophthalmoscopy wherever necessary or there is no other option.
- Sanitise hand and equipment (with min 60% alcohol content sanitiser) after each student.
- Programme coordinator monitors the equipment maintenance and regular cleaning.

### **After the Screening:**

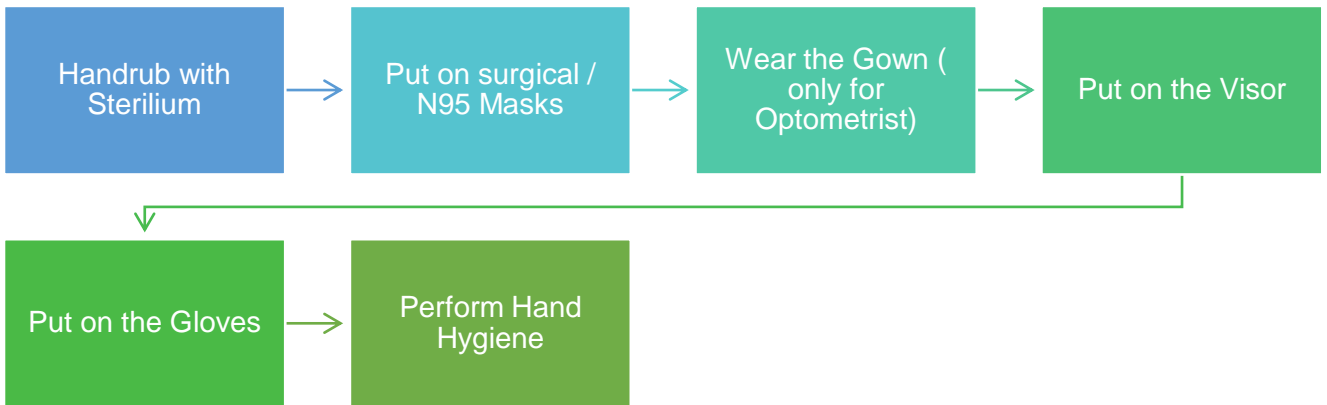
- Counselling of the students should be done by maintaining physical distancing.
- The counsellor should wear a mask and gloves during the teacher training, counselling and distribution of spectacles.
- Please follow the spectacles dispensing guidelines.
- After the students identified with refractive error select the frame, it can be cleaned with 0.5 % Hydrogen Peroxide spray and wipe with a clean cloth.
- Referral to the base hospital is also advised but while maintaining physical distancing.
- School need to ask the students to inform about any symptoms of fever, cough etc after the screening.
- Parents who participate during counselling should also wear a mask and maintain physical distancing.
- The team can act as a coordinating agency if any COVID-19 case is suspected they can share the IEC materials with the school authority, share the State, District helpline numbers for the students support and also submit a report weekly to the Local Health outpost about any identified case of COVID-19.
- The PPE's like Gloves, Mask to be disposed of in a separate bin. Hospital/organisation bio medical waste management policy to be followed.
- The Gown and Visor should be immersed in the 1% Sodium Hypochlorite solution for 20-30 minutes and washed with soap and water and dried, so that it can be used again.



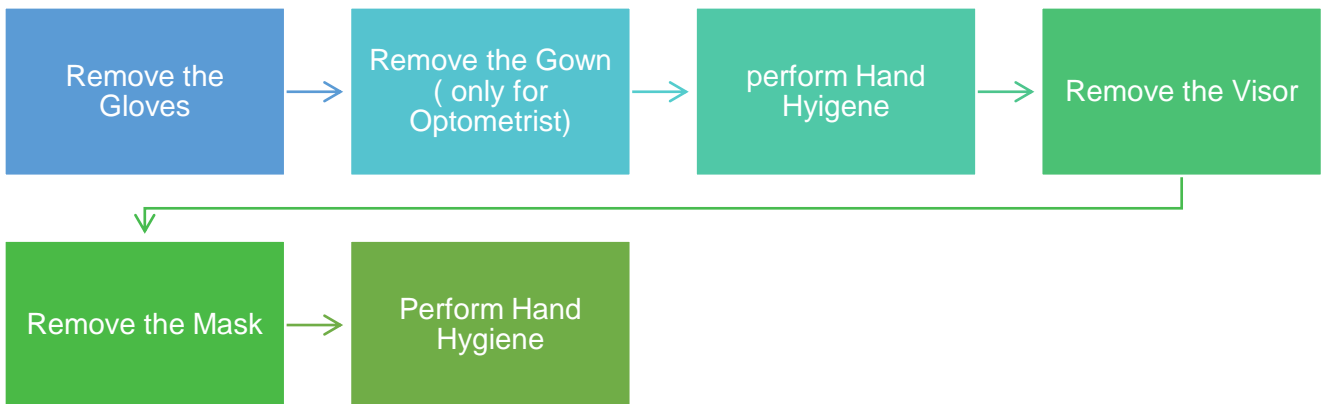
## Personal Protective Equipment

Wear appropriate PPE that must include hand gloves, protective goggles (preferable), mask, face shield/visors, and use hand sanitiser.

### Donning the Personal Protective Equipment Sequence



### Doffing the Personal Protective Equipment Sequence



## PPE disinfecting process

### How to Make 1 % Sodium Hypochlorite solution

Take 1 litre of 10% sodium Hypochlorite solution

Add 9 litres of water with the solution and mix well

After doffing, linen must be dipped in the solution for 20 to 30 minutes.

After 20-30 minutes take the linen and wash it with soap and dry it for next use.

- Questionnaire for Staff, Students and Teachers need to be administered (provided in annexure).
- Pre-Screening: Need to check the employee's temperature and assess symptoms before they start working for the day. Temperature checks should be mandatory before the individual enters the facility.
- Equipment: The team should clean all the necessary equipment to be used for screening like retinoscope, trial frame & trial set before the screening of each student.
- The team will need to take the prior permission from the District Education department. The Education department and the School Management needs to be informed about the safety measures and precautions taken by the implementation team for the school screening programme.
- The project coordinator needs to monitor whether the precautionary steps are followed by the team.

### General precautions

- If one has a refractive error, avoid wearing contact lenses as that leads to touching eyes more often than the average person. If possible wear glasses as it minimises the frequency of hand-to-eye contact.
- If an urge to itch or rub the eye is felt or even to adjust the glasses, use a tissue instead of fingers. Dry eyes can lead to more rubbing, so consider adding moisturizing drops to the eye routine.
- Do wash hands before eating, after using the restroom, sneezing, coughing or blowing nose as per the [steps and instructions](#) laid down by WHO.
- If symptoms of cough or fever are present or have been in close contact with someone who has these symptoms, kindly do not visit the school/vision centre for screening and inform the hospital authorities accordingly.
- Stay home when sick.

The above guidelines are prepared by Mission for Vision and in case of any queries or more information please feel free to contact Mission for Vision at [info@missionforvision.org.in](mailto:info@missionforvision.org.in)

Prepared as on 25<sup>th</sup> June and may need to be revised according to changes in protocols and guidelines as applicable from State / Central or expert bodies

## Annexure

### Staff

1. Did you have fever, cough, loss of smell & breathlessness recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
2. Did any of your relative suffer from COVID-19 recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
3. Did you or your relative (with whom you have had contact) travel to any COVID-19 affected areas / countries recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. Was your family was quarantined for 14 days by the District health department recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
5. Did you sterilise all the equipment which will be used for screening?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No



### Teacher

1. Did you have fever, cough, loss of smell & breathlessness recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
2. Did any of your relative suffer from COVID-19 recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
3. Did you or your relative (with whom you have had contact) travel to any COVID-19 affected areas / countries recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. Was your family quarantined for 14 days by the District health department recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No

### Student

1. Did you have fever, cough, loss of smell & breathlessness recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
2. Did any of your relative suffer from COVID-19 recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
3. Did you or your relative (with whom you have had contact) travel to any COVID-19 affected areas / countries recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
4. Was your family quarantined for 14 days by the District health department recently?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No



**Mission for Vision**  
partners in eye health

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