

New Covid-19 rules: What our workplace needs to look like

Distancing

All customers and employees must maintain a distance of one and a half metres from each other at all times. Work stations must be spaced at least one and a half metres apart – and if that isn't possible, “solid, physical barriers” must be placed between work stations. In stores, if it isn't possible to maintain one and half metres, workers must get a face shield or visor, or physical barriers must be installed.

Queue control - maintain physical distancing at the tuckshop and toilets. “These measures may include staggering the beginning and end of the school day, certain grades attending school on particular days and staggering break-times to avoid the concentration of learners in common areas. Also teach and model creating space and avoiding unnecessary touching.”

Covid compliance official

Need to assign an employee as a “compliance official”.

Hand sanitiser

There must be hand sanitiser (with at least 70% alcohol content) for workers and learners at the entrance to the premises.

Workers (Avryl, Ilaria, Eric, John) must sanitise their hands between each interaction with the public.

Workers must wash, or sanitise, their hands regularly while at work.

Cleaning and disinfecting

All work surfaces and equipment must be disinfected before work/school begins, regularly during the day and after work ends. Toilets, common areas, door handles and shared electronic equipment must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

No fabric towels

There must be adequate facilities for the washing of hands with soap and clean water, but fabric towels are prohibited - paper towels must be used.

Masks

Everyone on the premises must wear masks at all time. A minimum of two cloth masks must be provided to each employees, free of charge. One can be used on the commute to and from work, the other while at the workplace. An employer must ensure that these masks are washed, dried, and ironed.

Workers must also be educated about how to correctly use cloth masks.

Ultimately, the employer remains responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of personal protective equipment, the regulations say. Workers who are at greater risk must be provided with the "appropriate" personal protective equipment (PPE), for example N95 or N97 masks. These PPE must be free.

Ventilation

"Every workplace must be well ventilated to reduce the viral load."

Sick employees

Companies are required to inform employees that if they are sick or have symptoms associated with the Covid-19 they must not come to work and that they will get paid sick leave.

At the start of their shifts, all workers must be screened for "observable" symptoms associated with Covid-19: fever, cough, sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath. Workers must also report whether they have body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness. If they have these symptoms, they must inform their employer. Not doing so is illegal.

The company mustn't allow workers with symptoms to enter the workplace. Sick workers must be isolated, and should receive a FFP1 surgical mask. The

company must then arrange for the worker to be safely transported to be self-isolated, or for a medical examination or testing. The company must ensure that the worker is tested, and company must then disinfect the area and the worker's workstation.

If Covid-19 is diagnosed, it must be reported to the Department of Health as well as the Department of Employment and Labour, and the company must investigate how the worker was infected.

If a worker has Covid-19 symptoms, they must not be allowed to work, and the employer must call the Covid-19 hotline on 0800 02 9999 for instruction.

Workers with Covid-like symptoms can only return to work if they have been tested negative for Covid-19.

Companies are also obliged to raise awareness via leaflets and notices about the dangers of the virus, the manner of its transmission, the measures to prevent transmission such as personal hygiene, social distancing, use of masks, cough etiquette and where to go for screening or testing.

CHECKLIST FOR ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

1. Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviour and monitor their uptake. Ensure adequate, clean toilets for boys and girls:
 - Ensure soap and water is available at hand washing stations
 - Encourage frequent and thorough washing (at least 20 seconds)
 - Place hand sanitisers in toilets, classrooms, halls and near exits, where possible
2. Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, bannisters, lunch areas, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids, etc. to be cleaned hourly – a roster will be drawn up to be signed).

3. Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, etc.)
4. Post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
5. Ensure trash is removed daily and disposed of safely.