The Learning Tree: Coronavirus COVID-19 Preventive Measures
March 1, 2020

The Learning Tree is a safe and secure environment, in which our children and our colleagues can work with confidence. This brief policy is designed to outline the preventive measures that will be taken by the school and recommend home care strategies required to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). To help prevent the spread demands that everyone understands and plays their part. COVID-19 is not a school problem; it is a global problem, and recently a city-wide problem.

A. Parents as Primary Caregivers: What you can do at home

It is a parental responsibility to keep their child safe, to monitor their health and to take appropriate action when needed. It is especially true in the case of a contagious virus such as COVID-19. A critical aspect of tackling COVID-19 is preventative action. Many of these actions will start at home with your child.

1. Maintaining a Healthy Home Environment

The following are general principles everyone must follow as preventative measures:

- **washing hands with soap and water very frequently** or using an alcohol sanitizer if handwashing facilities are not available, especially
  - after visiting a public place (office, school, restaurant, etc.)
  - before leaving home
  - on arrival at school
  - after using the toilet
  - after break
  - after sports
  - before touching or eating food or snacks
  - before leaving school
  - upon arrival at home
- **washing hands thoroughly for 20 seconds** ensuring you scrub between the fingers and under the nails.
  Parents must teach their children how to do this effectively.
- **assigning personal towels** or using paper napkins (which need to be disposed responsibly)
- **avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth** – if need be, use a tissue to touch after washing hands. Wash hands immediately after.
- **avoiding close contact with others** – avoid touching others or remaining in close contact with any one else.
- **covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue** and then disposing it in a bin. If a tissue is not readily available, cover it with the inside of your elbow.
- **staying at home when unwell** – especially if you have a cold or are running a fever
- **seeking medical advice if there is cold or fever**
- **cleaning home surfaces thoroughly with a household disinfectant**
2. Preventive Health Measures

a. **Temperature Checks:** Parents are required to check their child’s fever daily before sending them to school; if they have even slightly above normal temperature, *please refrain from sending your child to school.*

b. **Preventing the spread of the virus:** The primary way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to ensure that any person exhibiting signs of the virus stay isolated from all others. Parents must take extra precautions and ensure that if their child, or any member in their family who their child has been exposed to, is exhibiting any signs of the virus (fever, cold, cough or shortness of breath), they remain at home for the quarantine period, that is, 14 days.

c. **Not attending school when sick:** Students who exhibit any signs of cold, fever, cough or shortness of breath (even when there has been no known exposure to the virus) must stay at home till all symptoms are clear. Attending school with any of the above symptoms will result in suspension. They must only return back to school after receiving a clearance note from the doctor, which must be emailed or sent to the school as evidence *before* the child resumes school.

d. **Usage of Masks by Students:** Parents who wish to have their child wear masks may do so. Health professionals do not recommend wearing masks to school. The masks may increase the risk of contracting an illness as they may become contaminated.

3. Travel & Contact Advisory:

a. If a student and/or his/her family member/s living in the same home has traveled to a country that has been infected with COVID-19, the student is required to stay home for the quarantine period of **14 days** before returning to school. Please inform the school office if your child has traveled to any of the high-risk countries in the past 14 days.

b. If a student and/or his family member/s is in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, they must not return to school for a period of at least 14 days since the last contact. Please inform the school office of such a case.
B. The School as Secondary Caregiver – What we will ensure at school

The best hope of preventing the spread of COVID-19 lies in robustly taking hygienic steps at home. A school is, by definition, a semi-public space. With almost 1000 children and adults, if the greater part of the burden of preventing the spread of the virus rests with the school, the chances of success will be limited.

Nevertheless, the school has a responsibility for providing a safe and secure environment for the students and staff. Therefore, the following are steps that TLT will be taking to reinforce the preventative steps taken at home. These include:

1. Cleanliness/Hygiene:

   a. **Hand Sanitizers:** All classrooms will be equipped with hand sanitizers that students will be required to use each time upon entry and exit from the classrooms. However, keep in mind that overuse of hand sanitizers is not advisable and washing hands with soap and water is far preferable.

   b. **Disinfection of common spaces:** Cleaning of handrails, banisters, bathrooms and other spaces will be ensured using disinfectant spray several times during the day.

   c. **Awareness sessions:** The biggest form of prevention is by following certain protocols such as washing hands frequently, covering your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbows or tissue when coughing and sneezing, avoiding touching your face, and being mindful of not touching others or being in their personal space. The Learning Tree will be conducting lessons around these topics to raise awareness amongst our students. World Health Organization posters will be placed throughout the school which provide the protocol of safety and hygiene. Please talk to your child about this in school to reinforce what has been taught in school.

   d. **Ventilation:** Teachers will keep classroom well-ventilated by keeping the doors and windows open. For the time being, air conditioners will not be turned on unless very necessary.

2. Precautions regarding attendance:

   a. **Not attending school whilst sick:** The Learning Tree will be following a “**zero-tolerance policy**” on sick children attending school. **Students who have any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to attend school:** fever, cough, sore throat and/or shortness of breath. Should they attend school, they will not only be sent home, but will be suspended from school for an extra week for putting other students and staff members at risk. The same policy applies to teachers, admin and all staff members regarding sickness.

   b. **Doctor’s clearance note:** Students who miss school due to sickness will be required to submit a doctor’s clearance note before they can enter the school premises. The note may be sent to the school office or through email to the relevant school administrator:

      - Preschool: huma.qazi@thelearningtree.edu.pk
      - Junior School: suroor.mushtag@thelearningtree.edu.pk
      - Senior School: samina.ashraf@thelearningtree.edu.pk (on behalf of Ms. Misbah Kodi)

Failure to abide with the above will result in negative consequences for the student.
3. **Health Checks:**

   a. **Temperature checks:** All domestic and security staff will be checked by the concerned managers daily. Teachers and admin will be asked to check their temperatures daily before school.

   b. **Breath Test Self-Check:** According to medical advice in Taiwan, individuals can perform a self-test to ensure that their lungs are infection-free by a simple test of holding their breath for a period of 10 seconds. **All students will be given this breath test by the class teacher every morning.** Teachers will monitor whether children can complete it successfully without discomfort, stuffiness, or tightness. All domestic and security staff will also be asked to take this test by managers daily. Teachers and admin will similarly be asked to check this daily before school.

4. **School Events:**

   a. **Field Trips and Learning Modules:** All field trips and learning modules will be temporarily suspended until further notice.

   b. **Parent-Teacher Conferences:** The scheduled March Parent Teacher Meeting has been cancelled for Junior and Senior School (except Grades 10 and 11). Details regarding the Grade 10 and 11 PTM will be conveyed to you later.

   c. **Academic Evening:** Academic Evening for both Junior and Senior School has been cancelled.

5. **Parents and Visitors on Campus:**

   a. **Drop-off and Pickup:** Parents are strongly advised to **avoid entering the school building** while dropping off your child in the morning. In case of young children, we will place staff members at the gate who can accompany your child to his/her classroom. However, **if it is absolutely necessary, please exit the building after dropping your child outside his/her classroom as quickly as possible.**

      At home time, pick up your children immediately and exit the campus as soon as possible. Please DO NOT gather and/or wait on campus for any reason. Should you have to wait for another child, you are requested to do so off campus or in your cars. Only 1 parent/guardian will be allowed to enter per family. This is to limit the number of visitors on the campus at any given time and limit exposure of individuals to one another.

   b. **Guest or Parent Visits:** The Learning Tree will not be allowing any classroom visitors until further notice.
6. School Canteen and Cafeteria:

a. **Canteen facilities:** The school canteen will remain open but will only be serving prepackaged foods such as water, juices, biscuits, chips, etc. to eliminate the risk of children becoming infected from food that may be contaminated.

b. **Snacks from home:** Please encourage your child to bring a healthy lunch from home.

c. **Outside food vendors:** Outside food vendors will also not be allowed on campus until further notice.

d. **Cafeteria:** The cafeteria surfaces will be cleaned with disinfectant regularly. However, students must take care of cleanliness and disposing trash responsibly.

We hope this information is useful and we will send more updates as conditions evolve.

The Learning Tree Admin Team

P.S. Please find attached simple information about Corona virus COVID-19 in the appendix.
Appendix:

To minimize distress and panic, we would encourage you to refrain from spreading unsubstantiated rumours and to base your communications about the virus on the facts alone.

Coronavirus COVID-19

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China in January 2020.

The approximate incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups - very few cases have been reported in children.

The Spread of COVID-19

Spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes (termed respiratory secretions) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission.

There are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

- secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs.
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a door knob or shaking hands then touching own face).