

23 March 2020

IMPORTANT NOTICE: SUSPENSION OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS & HELPING CHILDREN DURING COVID-19



Dear Teachers, Parents and Board of Management Members,

Notice to Suspend School Operations

In accordance with the official statement released by the office of the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea on Sunday 22nd March 2020 and shared with us from the Teacher Education Office at FinCorp Waigani; schools are to suspend operations effective immediately for 14 days until further notice in an attempt to minimise the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

KTF want to assist you in supporting your children during this time¹.

Ways to talk about the COVID-19 pandemic with children

With the world-wide spread of the Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19), we are faced with challenging times ahead. As the community conversation regarding COVID-19 increases, our children will be overwhelmed by the large volume of information they are receiving from many sources.

During this time of uncertainty, it is vital that adults (teachers, parents and community leaders) consider the safety of our children and ensure children are feeling secure, confident and well equipped with correct information to keep themselves safe.

Help children remain calm

Children in our communities look up to us for comfort and security with all aspects of life. With uncertain times ahead due to the global spread of COVID-19, adults need to protect children and reassure them regarding what is happening around them and in the world today. We need to check how children are feeling and talk to them about what they are hearing and assure them to keep positive and practice good hygiene to stay healthy and safe.

As adults, we need to first exercise calmness and control any fear about the COVID-19 virus. As we learn about the global situation, do not panic and pay attention to information from relevant authorities and departments and follow their advice. We must play a supporting

¹ Many of these suggestions were originally published in an article by Jasmine Green. Our thanks for sharing.

role in our families and be role models for our children in the way we behave, talk and interact with one and other so our children can behave responsibly and better respond to the situation.

Focus on facts about COVID-19 suitable for children

With much information being circulated within communities during these uncertain times, our children will certainly become confused and they can be easily misled about the COVID-19 pandemic. It is therefore necessary and our duty of care to share facts with children.

Start by asking your children what they already know about COVID-19 and listen to their response. This provides the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings they may have.

COVID-19 FACTS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)

“Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is to be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol-based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it’s important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

At this time there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments. WHO will continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings become available”.

For more information - https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

Encourage healthy practices

Assure children that they can reduce risks when they take responsibility for their health and

practice good hygiene habits. Please help them to understand the facts about the virus outlined above.



Let's help our children and families by encouraging the following hygiene practices:

1. Wash your hands often with soap for 20 seconds after using the toilet, touching shared things, playing and before eating.
2. Practice social distancing - keep 1.5 metres away from other people, refrain from touching one another and avoid large gatherings such as marketplaces, sports fields, church gatherings etc.
3. Eat your fruits and vegetables to keep your immune system healthy.

4. Drink lots of water to keep hydrated.
5. If you have any cold or flu-like symptoms, particularly a dry cough, sore throat and fever or chills, cover your face with a mask or scarf to stop the spread of virus. Report your symptoms immediately to your local health worker for advice or self-isolate from families and friends by staying home in your room for 14 days.
6. Never touch your face with unclean hands.

Save gut long sik COVID-19

World Health Organization
Representative Office
for Papua New Guinea

Yu ken kisim sik COVID-19 long ol narapela lain

- Taim ol i kus na maus wara bilong ol i pundaun igo insait long maus o nus bilong yu
- Na taim yu stap klostu, holim han o holim pas wantaim ol lain husait i gat sik COVID-19

Yu ken kisim COVID-19 taim yu holim ol samting we maus wara bilong siklain i pundaun antap long en

Tisu o pepa bilong klinim nus

hendol bilong dua

Ol komputa na masin bilong wok

baten bilong presim lift

pen

Ol samting we planti lain save holim

Taim yu holim displa ol samting na bihain holim pes, yu bai kisim dispela sik o givim lo ol narapela lain

Lukautim yu na femili long sik COVID-19

1. Wasim han olgeta taim

2. Taim yu kus, pasim maus wantaim elbo bilong yu

3. Noken holim pes bilong yu wantaim nus, maus na ai

4. Noken go long ol bikpla bung na stap longwe long ples igat planti lain

5. Stap 1m longwe long ol narapela sik manmeri husat igat kus na skin hot

6. Klinim gut antap bilong teibol, hendol bilong dua, ol baten, laptop, na ol samting we ol lain i save holim planti olgeta taim

Keeping children at home and occupied with learning

With the immediate closure of all schools, parents need to take responsibility for the safety of their children by involving them with meaningful life-skills such as showing them how to make things that would be used at home. These could include:

- Fixing furniture (how to use the hammer or tools safely).
- Weaving roof thatches – talk about patterns used, number of rows to weave to cover a surface area.
- Sewing bilums – talk about colour choices, patterns used, length of bilum and what will it be used for.
- Making gardens and showing them how to correctly grow certain food for specific months of the calendar year, how to make proper gardens considering weather conditions and distances of planting crops, etc.
- Encourage children to read their school notes and revised work.
- Encourage children to read books they have and discuss the stories with their families.
- Share legends or tumbuna stories with children and ask them to write the stories and share with teacher who can share it with KTF when they submit their quarterly school reports.
- Ask children to count the number of vegetables harvested each time they go to the garden and draw up picture graphs to represent the types of food harvested each week. They can then share the information with teacher and KTF when they return to school.

We hope this helps you and the children in your family and community at this challenging time.

Stay safe everybody, we're all in this together and we will get through this together.

Warm regards,
Dr Genevieve Nelson
CEO, KTF



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Approved for Release: Sunday, 22 March 2020

Today based on advice from the COVID-19 National Operation Centre (NOC 19) and National Security Council (NSC) recommendations, the National Executive Council (NEC) in an emergency meeting has decided on the following measures in light of first positive case of COVID-19 in our country.

This is a national security issue now and not just a health issue but a cross cutting issue including effect on economy, law and order and education of our children amongst other effects. Hence, the relevance of the following measures.

So far, we have done trace of the person that came into our country and he remains to date our only positive person who is in isolation and recovering but to clearly demarcate our country from spread and for Government to take stock from this bio security breach, we are taking the following measures.

1. Confirm this first case and its impact to ensure we contain its impact including treating, curing and sending the victim back to Australia.
2. Taking stock of all entry into PNG after 7th of March to ensure all are checked, tested and status of health affirmed. All who have come in or those that have come in contact with those who came into PNG since 7th of March are to report to the hotline below.
3. Declare a State of Emergency for 14 days starting on Tuesday the 24th of March in which the Commissioner of Police will assume control assisted by a call out placed on military to ensure lawful order, control and response to SOE control measures.
4. Following on our stop of incoming international flights, we now stopping all domestic flights for the next 14 days starting on Tuesday this week.
5. We direct that as of Tuesday 24th March 2020, no Public transportation of people and no movement from one province to another for a 14 day period. Only approved cargo and medicine and police /military personal will be moving. It is a 14 day lockdown in our country where ever you are.
6. The Provincial Governors and their Provincial Administrators with Provincial Police Commanders with the respective Provincial Health Authorities will be control points in all provinces.
7. All heads of departments and private companies are to embrace safe work place practise and non-essential staff are asked to stay at home for the next 14 days.
8. Education and Higher Education departments are asked to advance first term holiday as of tomorrow 23rd of March and the next 14 days are to be school holidays.



9. All who have come into the country as from the 7th of March 2020 or those who made contact with those who came into the country from that date please report, call or text to the hotline below.
10. No border crossing by foot or canoe and police /army presence in border areas will be stepped up.
11. Banks and financial institutions and super funds will be mobilised to work with Government on economic rescue packages for business in this down time.
12. The SOE controller through the office of Prime Minister will be the only official point of releasing statements to public.
13. The SOE controller will issue on details on how citizens and our country respond and behave in this time and breach of those will be punished as offence in times of emergency.
14. ICCC will ensure prices of all goods are within lawful range.
15. We setting multi sector agency task forces to report to the National Security Coordination centre to be at work 24 hours for 7 days until further notice.
16. All foreign friends of PNG in our country, your embassies and missions are available including our Foreign Affairs Department, to assist.
17. All this will be reviewed after the 14 days in which we would have mapped the presence of COVID-19 virus in our country.
18. PNG is a Christian country, we declare that Wednesday 25th of March 2020 becomes a national day of fasting and pray and for the next 21 days.

We have now dividing the country into zones to isolate this virus from spreading.

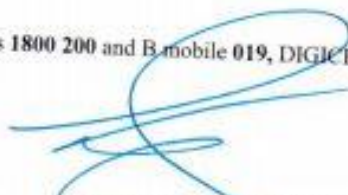
The mid PNG zone from Morobe and Madang provinces into the entire Highlands, the Central Papua (including NCD, Central and Gulf), the New Guinea Islands Zone, the Sepik Zone, the Western Border Zone, Eastern Papua Zone and the Bougainville Zone.

The SOE controller will delegate the PPCs to police the zones to ensure lawful abiding to this control measures.

We will get through this phase, we ask from corporation from all citizens, residents and businesses houses.

Hotline toll free number is **1800 200** and B mobile **019, DIGICEL 71960813**.

God bless PNG.



HON. JAMES MARAPE MP
Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea