



MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Dear Parents/legal custodians,

Similarly, to other influenza seasons, we are now in the peak of influenza with many cases of influenzas apart from common colds.

In order to minimize the spread of respiratory infections, children should be kept at home if they are sick and have a fever or flu like symptoms. The best way to protect oneself from getting ill with respiratory viruses is to:

- Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds, and if not available, use alcohol-based hand disinfectant;
- Cover your mouth when coughing with a tissue, or sleeves;
- Cover your nose when sneezing with a tissue, or sleeves;
- Dispose of used tissues immediately;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth before washing your hands;
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.

As for all infectious diseases, all children/students and staff who are sick should be sent home and should remain at home until symptoms resolve and follow family doctor's instructions.

As you are aware from the media, a novel new respiratory virus has been discovered which originated in China, the *Novel Coronavirus*. This new virus is spreading in China where there is human to human transmission. Several countries have cases which in the majority are imported cases from China whereby persons who were exposed to the virus in China and developed symptoms later. At present there have been no confirmed cases in Malta. The Public Health authorities are carrying out all the necessary measures to detect any possible cases as early as possible so cases will be contained.

If you require further information on this virus, you can access the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) within the Superintendence of Public Health, Ministry for Health website on:

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/Pages/temp/Novel-coronavirus.aspx>

In the current situation, the risk of ongoing transmission of *Novel Coronavirus* is only in China and hence the risk of exposure is if a person was in China or had exposure to a case. If your child has visited China within the past 14 days, contact the IDCU on Tel. no 21324086.

We encourage parents/legal custodians to follow basic prevention measures, refrain from sending sick children to school throughout the scholastic year to avoid spread of infectious disease and to allay any fear by seeking advice of reputable sources of information.

Ms. Maria Mc Namara
Director General
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