



## Operational Guidance Note: The Use of Educational Facilities / Temporary Learning Centres as Shelters, Markets & Treatment Units for COVID-19

### Introduction/Background

The scale of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education systems and on children and young people's learning and wellbeing, as well as on educational professionals, is increasing daily. This truly is a global crisis which is preventing children and adolescents across all countries, including those affected by conflict and displacement, from fulfilling their right to quality, safe, and inclusive education. With Sustainable Development Goal 4, the global community has committed to realising the right to quality education for all children and adolescents by 2030. The COVID-19 crisis puts this promise into jeopardy more than ever before<sup>1</sup>.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) activated the Health Focused National Emergency Operations Centre upon confirmation of the first case of COVID-19 on February 27, 2020. The Federal Government on 7th March 2020 established the Presidential Task Force for the Control of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disease. In the Nigerian National COVID-19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan, under Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) there is an assigned to "provide accessories for tents and IPC materials (plasma air purifiers) for the new structures identified and repurposed (Considering stadia, isolated Primary Health Care centres and school buildings in every state) to surge the system and support the treatment centres"<sup>2</sup>. On 24th March 2020, the House of Representatives adopted the motion by Speaker Rep. Femi Gbajabamila that the Federal Ministry of Education should make available hostels in the now-vacated Federal Government Colleges for use as emergency care centres and isolation units.

In an outbreak, educational facilities and Temporary Learning Centres tend to be used as hubs for medical care in contexts where the demand for health care services and facilities exceed capacity. Educational facilities are further used as makeshift food markets to minimise the disruption of market closures. The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EiEWGN) notes that Nigeria has recorded separate incidents during COVID-19 in April 2020 where educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres have been re-purposed<sup>3</sup>.

### Key Points to Consider

Educational facilities and Temporary Learning Centres should not be used as temporary health facilities, markets and shelter to avoid the risk of contamination and delayed return to school. Where national or state directives require the temporary re-purposing of educational facilities, the following considerations must be addressed:

- **Duration of repurposing** – how long will the school remain under use as a health centre, market or shelter?
- **Conditions of return** – what are the conditions to ensure return of the

facility and assets for immediate use as an education facility?

- **Communication/messaging** – what are the messages that need to be communicated to school management authorities, teachers, parents, all community members and learners, regarding re-purposing of the site and the process of its return to use as an educational facility? Who is responsible for this messaging?

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<sup>1</sup> Learning Must Go On: Recommendations for keeping children safe and learning, during and after the COVID-19 crisis (April 2020)

<sup>2</sup> National COVID19 Multi-Sectoral Pandemic Response Plan (March 2020)

<sup>3</sup> in Banki and Pulka, Borno for 254 returnees; and Ejigbo, Osun for 127 returnees. In addition, Lagos state has opened Emergency Neighbourhood Food Markets in educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres to provide residents with access to food supplies during the lockdown.

## Measures to be taken to minimize the impact of the use of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres as shelter/markets/treatment centres for COVID-19: Recommendations

### General Planning

- The federal and state authorities should identify alternative sites to be used as shelters, markets, and clinical treatment centres to ensure that educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres are only re-purposed as the last option.
- The federal and state authorities should have a budget for repairs, construction of temporary latrines, provision of clean running water, handwashing facilities and disinfection consumables.
- Disadvantages arising from the use of the educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres as a shelter, market, or clinic should be offset by tangible benefits for the educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres (i.e. improving health, building structures, etc.)

[https://mcusercontent.com/ba7a4647963c92eabff06651a/files/8beea758-deea-4ff6-9571-0419de56522f/SOP\\_Shelter\\_Disinfection\\_2020.docx](https://mcusercontent.com/ba7a4647963c92eabff06651a/files/8beea758-deea-4ff6-9571-0419de56522f/SOP_Shelter_Disinfection_2020.docx)

### When an educational facility/Temporary Learning Centre is designated as a shelter/market/treatment centre by the authorities

- The head teacher should be involved in the decision to re-purpose the educational facility. S/he should, in conjunction with relevant agencies and task force, take joint inventory of facilities and other assets/resources to be handed over.
- Before the school is re-purposed for use as a shelter, market, or treatment centre, the head teacher should be given time to remove or store furniture, school equipment, and other assets.
- All facilities (classrooms, toilets, sinks, hostels, child friendly spaces etc.) should be cleaned daily according to NCDC and WHO guidelines.  
([https://ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/docs/protocols/175\\_1583410399.pdf](https://ncdc.gov.ng/themes/common/docs/protocols/175_1583410399.pdf)),  
[https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/guidance-for-educational-facilities/Temporary Learning Centres-workplaces-institutions](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/guidance-for-educational-facilities/Temporary_Learning_Centres-workplaces-institutions)
- Once a date for the official re-opening of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres is given, the centres should be returned to their original purpose immediately so as to ensure that the educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres can be re-opened on time. As part of this handing back, the entire educational and learning environment should be cleaned and disinfected in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Water Resources, Child Protection, local actors (including CSOs, **women groups, mothers' associations**) and authorities. Any structural damage to the educational facilities should also be made good. This process must be transparent and communicated to learners, parents, caregivers, educators and the community so as to reduce reluctance of learners' return to school for fears of contamination.
- Systems to listen to and address concerns that learners and educators may have once learning resumes should be established and supported.

## Recommended Accountability and Operational Guidelines

Action	Responsible Actor(s)	Monitoring Actor(s)	Timeline
Identification and designation of educational facilities and temporary learning facilities as shelters, markets and treatment units for COVID-19.	<b>Lead:</b> State Governor <b>Others:</b> Commissioners for Education, Health, Environment, Agriculture, Market, Industry and PTA/SBMC Chair.	CSOs in Education and Health sectors. Women groups, Mothers' Associations. State multi-sectoral Task force Team. PTA/SBMC representatives. State Agency for Mass Education (SAME).	As indicated by State Governor, Commissioner for Health.
Inventory of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres assets	<b>Lead:</b> Head teacher <b>Others:</b> State Ministry of Education (SMoE), SUBEB and PTA/SBMC representatives.	Commissioners for Education and Health or their representatives; SUBEB; CSOs working on Education and Health. Women groups, Mothers' Associations.	Prior to re-purposing of school facilities. Guided by timelines given by SMoE and Health authorities.
Removal and/or storage of furniture and educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres equipment and other assets into separate, locked rooms.	<b>Lead:</b> Head teacher <b>Others:</b> PTA/SBMC representative.	Representatives of SMoE and Health; SUBEB; CSOs in Education, and Health. Women groups, Mothers' Associations.	Prior to re-purposing of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres facilities
Provision of hygiene and sanitation facilities/materials (including replenishment monitoring as needed)	<b>Lead:</b> Commissioners for Education, Health and Water Resources; <b>Others:</b> Rural, Water and Sanitation agency (RUWASA)	SMoE and SUBEB (Quality Assurance, School Health, Planning, and Administration). State Agency for Mass Education (SAME). Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). Women groups, Mothers' Associations. CSOs in Education, Health and WASH sectors	Prior to re-purposing of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres facilities to last throughout duration of re-purposing.
Training in hygiene maintenance of the educational facilities and Temporary Learning Centres for duration of re-purposing.	<b>Lead:</b> Commissioners for Education, Health and Water Resources; <b>Others:</b> Rural, Water and Sanitation agency (RUWASA)	SMoE and SUBEB (Quality Assurance, School Health, Planning, and Administration). State Agency for Mass Education (SAME), LGEA, Women groups, Mothers' Associations.	Prior to re-purposing of educational facilities and Temporary Learning Centres' facilities to last throughout duration of re-purposing.
Daily cleaning and adherence to WHO and NCDC Guidelines (classrooms, toilets, sinks, hostels etc.).	<b>Lead:</b> Commissioners for Health, Agriculture, Market & Industry and Education, PTA/SBMC Chair. <b>Others:</b> Rural, Water and Sanitation agency (RUWASA)	SMoE and SUBEB (Quality Assurance, School Health and Administration), LGEA, Head teacher/ PTA/SBMC representative, community and local groups, including Women groups, Mothers' Associations.	Daily

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Specialized Waste Disposal	<b>Lead:</b> Commissioner for Health <b>Others:</b> Rural, Water and Sanitation agency (RUWASA)	SMoE and Environment (State Environmental Waste Management Board). Local Government Education Authority. Women groups, Mothers' Associations. Education and Health CSOs	Daily throughout duration of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres re-purposing.
Timeline for the educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres' return to its original function	<b>Lead:</b> State Governor and Ministry of Health <b>Others:</b> SMOE	Local Government Education Authority, CSOs in Health and Education sectors. Women groups, Mothers' Associations. State multi-sectoral Task force Team. PTA/SBMC representatives. State Agency for Mass Education (SAME).	No later than two weeks before educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres re-opening date
Decontamination and disinfection of educational facilities/Temporary Learning Centres' (including certification of safe use)	<b>Lead:</b> Ministry of Health, Water Resources and Environment	SMoE and SUBEB (Quality Assurance, School Health & Administration), Head teacher and PTA/SBMC representative, CSOs in Education and Health.	Two weeks before reopening date

### About Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EiEWGN)

The Education in Emergencies Working Group Nigeria (EiEWGN) is led by the Federal Ministry of Education and co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children. This coordination structure with mandate in EiEWGN was established in 2012 and has over 50 active member organisations at national and state levels. Nigeria was part of the first group of 37 countries that endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) on May 29th 2015 and the Honourable Minister of Education signed Letter of Endorsement on March 8th 2018. The Federal Executive Council (FEC) on 20th March 2019 approved the Memorandum on "Mainstreaming and Implementation of the SSD Laws and Policies in Nigeria" thus paving the way for the domestication of SSD. In December 2019, The President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Safe Schools Declaration Ratification Document signaling the country's commitment to ratify and uphold the principles of the SSD. The Federal Ministry of Education is developing a National Policy on Safety and Security in Schools which focuses on violence, natural hazards, conflict, everyday hazards (including health hazards) and safer facilities.

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