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UPDATE 25/02/2020

Communication regarding the outbreak of COVID-19 disease

The outbreak of COVID-19 disease, caused by a novel Coronavirus, started in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The outbreak has gradually spread throughout all mainland China and has affected several other neighbouring as well distant countries.

(<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>)

However, the risk of infection is not the same for all affected countries - it is only countries with sustained community transmission that present a significant risk of infection.

(<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/areas-presumed-ongoing-community-transmission-2019-ncov>).

It is only for these **areas** with sustained community transmission - as of today China, Hong Kong, Macau and the lockdown area in Italy: Bertonico, Casalpusterlengo, Castelgerundo, Castiglione d'Adda, Codogno, Fombio, Maleo, San Fiorano, Somaglia, Terranova del passerine, Vò - that precautionary measures by the European schools are to be put in place:

- (I) Any children returning from such areas, should be admitted to the European schools only 14 days after their return date and on the condition that the whole family remains asymptomatic.
- (II) Any member of staff working in a European school should avoid travelling to such areas and, if they do so, they should also only return to work after 14 days have passed since their return date.

IMPORTANT: The same rules will apply for any area that the Italian authorities define as a red area in the future. For regular updates on this red area please visit the link below and check 'Allegati' (attachments) on the right side of the screen for updated information.

<http://www.anci.lombardia.it/dettaglio-news/2020224166-coronavirus-%E2%80%93-chiarimenti-interpretativi-su-ordinanza-regione-lombardia-%E2%80%93-ministero-della-salute/>

Children and staff returning from other areas without sustained community transmission do not need to undergo any quarantine period. However, as the situation is evolving, the list of areas with sustained community transmission will be updated, in close cooperation with the services of the European Commission and any country-specific advice needs to be modified accordingly.

Meanwhile the appropriate hygiene measures, as recommended by WHO to fight the outbreak (see below), should already be introduced at the European schools.

Basic protective measures against the new coronavirus (source: WHO¹)

Wash your hands frequently

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub if your hands are not visibly dirty.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub eliminates the virus if it is on your hands.

Practice respiratory hygiene

When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – discard tissue immediately into a closed bin and clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Why? Covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing prevent the spread of germs and viruses. If you sneeze or cough into your hands, you may contaminate objects or people that you touch.

Maintain social distancing

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

Why? When someone who is infected with a respiratory disease, like 2019-nCoV, coughs or sneezes they project small droplets containing the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the virus.

Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

¹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

Why? Hands touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early

Tell your health care provider if you have travelled in an area in China where 2019-nCoV has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone with who has travelled from China and has respiratory symptoms.

Why? Whenever you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing it's important to seek medical attention promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Respiratory symptoms with fever can have a range of causes, and depending on your personal travel history and circumstances, 2019-nCoV could be one of them.

If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China

If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China, carefully practice basic respiratory and hand hygiene and stay home until you are recovered, if possible.

As a general precaution, practice general hygiene measures when visiting live animal markets, wet markets or animal product markets

Ensure regular hand washing with soap and potable water after touching animals and animal products; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with hands; and avoid contact with sick animals or spoiled animal products. Strictly avoid any contact with other animals in the market (e.g., stray cats and dogs, rodents, birds, bats). Avoid contact with potentially contaminated animal waste or fluids on the soil or structures of shops and market facilities.

Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked animal products

Handle raw meat, milk or animal organs with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.