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UPDATE 28/02/2020

Communication regarding the outbreak of COVID-19 disease

This message should be considered as a complement to the communication sent yesterday, 27/02/2020. We have in fact received an updated communication published by the European Commission relevant services late on 27/02/2020.

We are in constant contact with the relevant services of the European Commission.

As the novel coronavirus continues to spread, it is the concern of us all. According to the advice received, the virus seems to cause a milder disease than initially feared for the majority of the population. It is therefore important to keep in mind the facts. Overall, the COVID-19 disease is mild in more than 80% of cases.

It appears that severe cases and deaths tend to occur among elderly people or people with serious, pre-existing, health problems. Healthy people younger than 60 tend overall to have a milder disease. Children in particular seem to have only mild symptoms.

Therefore, with this scientific and medical data, at this stage, we call for caution and no panic. We should bear in mind all precautionary measures that we have been promoting since the beginning of the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease, as well as the general precautionary measures during seasonal influenza.

Given the age and health characteristics of European Schools staff and pupils, it is likely that in the majority of cases, those affected will probably develop mild, self-limited disease for a few days and then quickly recover.

We have taken various measures to better protect all members of the Schools Communities and with which you are expected to comply. Here is an update for Italy:

For the **lockdown (red) area** in Italy: Bertinico, Casalpusterlengo, Castelgerundo, Castiglione d'Adda, Codogno, Fombio, Maleo, San Fiorano, Somaglia, Terranova del passerine, Vò – the same precautionary measures by the European schools are to be put in place:

- (I) Any children returning from such areas, as well as children whose close family members have returned from these 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. Further instructions for the admissions will be issued in due time.
- (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. Again, further instructions for the admissions will be issued in due time

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/>

For the “**yellow areas**” in Italy, or “area gialla”, extending essentially to most of the regions in Northern Italy (Lombardy - including Crema and Bergamo, which are under heightened surveillance - Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Veneto):

- (I) Any children returning from such areas should be admitted to the European schools, **unless the child or one close member of the family had any contact with an ill person infected with the novel coronavirus COVID-19, or upon condition that the child or any close member of the family having travelled in those areas remains asymptomatic.**
- (II) Any member of staff working in a European school returning from such areas, they should also return to work, **unless they had any contact with an ill person infected with the novel coronavirus COVID-19, or upon condition that they have not developed any symptoms**

In the event that a member of staff has been travelling to the “yellow area” and **has had any contact with a sick person infected with the novel coronavirus COVID-19 or has developed any symptoms**, you are advised to get in contact with your general practitioner for advice and care. If you do not have a GP, you can contact the relevant national number for guidance on where to go:

Brussels and Belgium

Région de Bruxelles-Capitale : 0478 77 77 08

Luxembourg

Direction de la santé, Division de l'inspection sanitaire (24h/24) : Tel (+352) 247-85650 ou via 112

Ispra and other JRC sites

Italy: <http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/homeNuovoCoronavirus.jsp>

Netherlands: <https://www.honk.nu/huisartsenpost>

Germany: https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/nCoV.html

Spain: <https://www.mscbs.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov-China/home.htm>

In case of medical emergency, call 112.

IMPORTANT: Always inform the caregiver about your recent travel history and do not go to the clinic without prior telephone contact.

As the situation is evolving, the list of areas with **sustained community transmission** will go on being updated, in close cooperation with the services of the European Commission. Any equivalent country-specific advice needs to be modified accordingly.

We briefly recall the standard hygiene recommendations that will reduce exposure to, and transmission of, viral respiratory illness, that we recommend to recall to the School Community:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms (fever and cough);
- Frequently clean your hands by using alcohol-based hand cleanser or soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow (not hands!) or a tissue – throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands;
- Update your flu-vaccination: this will not protect you against the coronavirus, but may protect you from getting flu-related respiratory symptoms

A more complete information can be found on the website of WHO (World Health Organisation):

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

We finally remind, in general and more importantly in the present context, that children who develop any symptoms should visit their general practitioner and follow his/her advice and when relevant remain at home. The same is recommended to members of staff.