**CPE 56th Advisory: Updates to Safe Management Measures for Private Education Institutions**

Dear Sirs,

1. On 14 December 2021, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced an update to existing Safe Management (SMMs), in preparation for the recent emergence of the Omicron variant globally. MTF’s press release is attached below.



**Guidance for Private Education Institutions (PEIs)**

**[Updated]** *National SMMs*

1. **Social Gathering Group Size:** The permissible social gathering group size remains at 5 persons per group. Accordingly, activities in PEIs can resume in groups of five, subject to any additional and/or separate guidelines for specific higher-risk activities, including total participant caps and safe distance requirements etc.
2. **Food & Beverage (F&B) outlets:** Groups of up to 5 persons, even if not from the same household, will be allowed to dine in at F&B establishments and coffeeshops, provided that full Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures (VDS) checks are in place, as outlined in the 55th advisory dated 22 November 2021.
3. **[New] Reduction of Exemption Period for Recovered Persons from 1 January 2022:** From 1 January 2022, all recovered persons from COVID-19 who are not fully vaccinated will be given a 180-day exemption after infection[[1]](#footnote-1) to enter settings where VDS are implemented. This is reduced from the current exemption period of 270 days, and calculated starting from the day of the first positive SAR-CoV-2 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test, obtained in Singapore. The adjustment is made due to concerns over the transmissibility and heightened reinfection risk of the Omicron variant, and quicker waning of protection acquired through past infections. These recovered persons who are not fully vaccinated should complete their primary series vaccination regime promptly.
4. Non-fully vaccinated individuals who had recovered from COVID-19 infection prior to 1 January 2022 will also have their exemption period reduced from 270 days to 180 days. However, for individuals who will already exceed the 180-day period as of 1 January 2022, they will be granted an additional one month grace period till **31 January 2022** to complete their primary series vaccination regime, so as to continue being able to enter VDS settings. As recovered individuals need only one dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of Sinovac[[2]](#footnote-2) under the National Vaccination Programme to complete their primary series vaccination regime, they should do so by 17 January 2022, to allow an interval of 14 days from the completion of the regimen to be considered fully vaccinated. During the grace period from the date when they have exceeded the 180-day period, these individuals may produce their discharge memo for entry into VDS settings.
5. **[New] Enhancement of VDS**: To ensure we are prepared to deal with a spread of the Omicron variant in our community, the following enhancements would be made to the VDS:
6. **Removal of Concession for Unvaccinated Individuals from 1 January 2022:** The concession for unvaccinated individuals to perform a Pre-Event Test (PET) in lieu of being fully vaccinated in various VDS settings will be removed with effect from 1 January 2022. For avoidance of doubt, PET will continue to be accepted under the Workforce Vaccination Measures for now (c/f Para 13 and 14).
7. **Extension of VDS to more venues from 1 February 2022:** From 1 February 2022, VDS will be expanded to more settings and activities, including all indoor sports facilities, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs), and leisure guests in hotels, hostels and service departments.
8. **While the extension of VDS does not apply to PEIs, PEIs with similar settings to IHLs are encouraged to adopt similar measures, as follows:**
9. All students and visitors will need to be either (i) vaccinated, (ii) medically ineligible for vaccination, or (iii) recovered from COVID-19 in last 180 days to return to campus. Checks should be conducted before individuals enter the campus.
10. This is with the exception of full-time students in Nitec/Higher Nitec, Diploma or Undergraduate Degree qualifications programmes.
11. **Extension of VDS to all events from 1 February 2022:** From 1 February 2022, all events, irrespective of event size, must implement VDS in order to proceed.

**[New]** *Treatment of Transient Mask-Off Classes*

1. We have received enquiries from providers of mask-off classes, which may involve transient mask-off activities (e.g., food tasting). For avoidance of doubt, classes involving transient mask-off activities need not be subjected to VDS, as long as PEIs are able to keep the unmasking in such classes to transient moments.

**[New]** *SMMs for school-based activities*

1. We have also received enquiries from PEIs offering full-time pre-tertiary programmes (i.e. similar settings to national schools) about SMMs for school-based activities. We will provide an update on this separately when ready.

*Sector-Specific Guidelines for Higher Risk Activities*

1. PEIs are also required to adhere to all prevailing guidelines for higher-risk classes and activities on campus. Additional safe management measures apply for Sport or Physical Activity, Dance, Singing, Wind/Brass Instrument, Voice Training, Speech and Drama Classes:
2. For all sport or physical activity classes, as well as outdoor dance classes, please refer to the Sport Singapore advisory, available at: <https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/Newsroom/Media-Releases>
3. For indoor dance classes, singing, wind/brass instrument classes, voice training, and speech and drama classes, please refer to the National Arts Council’s advisory, available at <https://www.nac.gov.sg/support/covid-19/safe-management-measures-smms/latest-updated-smms-for-arts-and-culture-stakeholders>
4. Live Performances: Live performances may be permitted, subject to the relevant SMMs outlined in National Arts Council (NAC)’s advisory. For live performances in PEI venues, they can be open to ticketed members of public. Nevertheless, PEIs should seek approval from CPE prior to organising live performances.

**[New]** *Workplace measures*

1. All PEI staff (including non-employees such as vendors and contractors who work at your premises) must adhere to MOM’s Workforce Vaccination Measures (WVM) at all times.
2. From 1 January 2022, under the WVM, unvaccinated staff should work from home (WFH) wherever possible. Unvaccinated employees who need to return to the workplace will need to have a negative PET result (valid for 24 hours prior to entry). Medically ineligible unvaccinated employees are exempted from the PET requirement. PEIs should also continue to adhere to existing SMMs for the workplace as per MOM’s prevailing [advisory](https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures).Visitors to PEIs are considered transient in nature and are not subject to WVM. **With the WVM in place, from 1 January 2022, up to 50% of staff who can work from home (WFH) can return to the office.**

**[New] Updates to Fast and Easy Testing Rostered Routine Testing (FET-RRT) and Vaccinate or Regular Test (VoRT) Regimes**

1. **[New] Extension of subsidies for FET-RRT Regime**: As we step up efforts to detect and contain potential transmission of Omicron, continued support will be provided for PEIs on mandatory FET-RRT. The subsidies for the scheme will be extended until 31 March 2022. Beyond that, PEIs should be prepared to factor in testing costs as part of normal business operations.
2. **[New] Sunsetting of VoRT**: With the introduction of WVM from 1 January 2022, **MOH will sunset the VORT regime from 1 January 2022**. Those who are medically ineligible for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, and are required to be tested twice weekly under VoRT, will continue to be eligible for the Government-funded ART kits until 31 December 2021. PEIs will no longer need to conduct VoRT with effect from 1 January 2022.

**Social Responsibility and National SMMs**

1. All PEIs must continue to abide by prevailing national SMMs. PEIs should also check [www.gov.sg/features/covid-19](http://www.gov.sg/features/covid-19) for the latest updates and advisories.
2. In addition to the above, PEIs are reminded to adhere to the following:
3. Hygiene: High-touch surfaces should be cleaned frequently, and disinfection of premises should be carried out daily, if not more frequently.
4. Safe distancing: All students and staff are to wear masks at all times[[3]](#footnote-3). There should be staggered arrival and dismissal to reduce congestion and intermingling among students in school and on campus.
5. PEIs should regularly remind all students and staff that if they are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat etc., they should visit a Swab and Send Home (SASH) clinic via private transport for a doctor to assess and advise them on the next steps. Students and staff should adopt safe distancing and good hygiene practices at all times.
6. Please contact us via [CPE\_Registration@ssg.gov.sg](mailto:CPE_Registration@ssg.gov.sg) if you require any clarification. Thank you.

1. This exemption does not apply to entry into VDS+Test events or activities i.e. individuals will still have to do ART prior to these events. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For non-fully vaccinated recovered persons, it is recommended that you receive one dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (two doses if Sinovac under the National Vaccination Programme or Sinopharm under Special Access Route) at least 3 months after the date of diagnosis of COVID-19 infection. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Children under 6 years old are not required to wear masks. Nonetheless, they are encouraged to wear a mask or face shield. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)