

- Virus

Parents' guide to keeping children safe in school dos and don'ts

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With several schools now holding face-to-face classes, the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) on Thursday listed out some safety reminders for parents. Dr Hend Al Awadhi, head of health promotion and education at the DHA, called on parents to strictly follow all health instructions issued by schools, as well as those detailed in the authority's guidebook. Below is an excerpt from the guidelines, highlighting some practices parents must avoid.



1 Do Not send kids to school if they have symptoms

Parents must be aware of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and they should NOT send their child to school if they exhibit any symptoms (See graphic.) If the child starts developing any of these Covid-19 symptoms at home, he/she must remain at home and the parent must inform the school immediately. If needed, the parent must seek medical advice and request a PCR test before returning the child to school. If the result is negative, the parent can send the child to school only after he/she is free of symptoms. Parents can submit the PCR test result and sick leave/attendance certificate upon the child's return to school.

If the result is positive, parents should inform the school immediately. They should then follow medical instructions and adhere to isolation precautions.

2 Check on their health before dropping them off

Parents and companions should observe children for any signs and symptoms during the journey to and from school, while in the car. If any signs and symptoms appear, the child must return home, seek medical advice and inform the school immediately. The parent must adhere to the above procedures depending on whether the test result is positive or negative.

3 Do Not put your child on the bus if he/she has symptoms

If signs and symptoms appear while riding the bus, the student should be seated in front and the school health and safety officer must take the child to the isolation room at school upon arrival. The school must inform the parent to take the child home. The school must also request the parents to seek immediate medical advice. Parents must cooperate with the school by taking the child immediately and they should follow the medical instructions.

4 Keep your child at home if he/she has been in contact with a positive case

Don't send your child to school if he/ she was in contact with a positive case. A close contact is any individual who was within a distance of 2 meters or less of a Covid-19 infected person for 15 minutes or more. If a child is identified as a close contact, parents must inform the school and adhere to home quarantine for 10 days from the date of the last contact with the infected person.

5 Do Not send your child to parties

Parents must refrain from sending their children to big gatherings, like birthday parties, to minimise their chances of exposure to the Covid-19 virus.

6 Educate your child on preventive measures

It's the parent's responsibility to make sure that their child is aware of vital information related to Covid-19 such as, what the common symptoms are, and what precautionary measures they should take.

7 make sure they are wearing masks

Students above six years old should wear a face mask. Parents must provide children with an adequate number of masks and sanitizers wherever they go.

8 Ensure kids have all the school supplies they need

Children must have sufficient school supplies, food and other essential items so they won't have to borrow or share items with one another.

9 Pay attention to your child's mental health

The world is currently facing a difficult challenge where adults and children alike may experience fear, worry, and stress. Parents must speak to their children and be open and listen to them. They should give them reassurance and comfort.

10 Follow all precautionary measures

Wearing face masks, sanitising regularly and practicing physical distancing and all other safety measures are key to preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Now that the UAE has reached the Red Planet, the Emirates Mars Mission (EMM) team is moving towards its next big targets. And according to the EMM's lead scientist and the UAE's Minister of State for Advanced Technology, the next step is to engage with the private sector in developing the country's space industry.

"The next big bet when it comes to the space sector in the UAE is transferring a lot of the experiences we have gained over the course of the last 15 years to the private sector," said the minister, Sarah Al Amiri, who also chairs the UAE Space Agency.

Addressing a global space forum on Thursday, she said: "We aim to establish a vibrant space industry in the course of the next five years so we can have companies that are able to export space systems, space products and services. This is fundamental to enabling the UAE's new space economy." The minister also highlighted the importance of international partnerships in exploring space for the greater good of humanity.

Al Amiri was speaking at a virtual panel discussion 'In The New Space Age', organised by the Washington-based digital media company The Hill, where other panelists included astronauts such as Nasa's Jessica Watkins, the UAE's Hazzaa AlMansoori; space agency leaders; and scientists from the US and the Middle East.

More than anything, the success of the UAE's Mars mission has inspired space dreams and lit the spark in the minds of young Arabs, Al Amiri said. It has aimed to encourage youngsters to pursue careers in science.

"Our space programme over all was an experiment in transferring know-how, building experience in a sector that never existed. And inevitably, this is what you need when you are diversifying your economy. And it's a means towards which you establish a sector, build experience, attract the right talent and create the right environment for that industry to flourish," she said.

Talking about the importance of embracing diversity in science,

Al Amiri highlighted the fact that the UAE is home to over 200 nationalities, who bring in with them different perspectives that widen horizons. "It is the differences in our perspectives and the way we solve problems that makes science happen," Al Amiri said. Our space programme overall was an experiment in transferring know-how, building experience in a sector that never existed."

Sarah Al Amiri, Minister of State for Advanced Technology