

Changes

Patricia Nambiar

3 July 2020

Like all private schools, we expect to open our doors soon. However, the workplace as we knew it before Covid-19 brought on the Movement Control Order (MCO) will not be the same.

For sure the coronavirus pandemic 2020 has expanded our vocabulary. *Flatten the curve, SOP, PPEs, WFH, circuit breaker, break the chain* have become everyday parlance. We have learned the difference between [epidemic and pandemic, quarantine and isolation](#), and [asynchronous and synchronous learning](#).

Then there is the as yet largely undefined "new normal." What is clear is that we will prioritise Hygiene when we resume office life with the basic changes aimed at keeping staff and students safe from the dreaded coronavirus.

This involves a combination of measures ranging from providing hand sanitisers and disposable face masks to temperature checks, and complying with measures to help health authorities contact trace. In our case, this involves the simple task of registering our movements on the government's Sejahtera app.

Admin staff who have already reported for work are now seated apart at the minimum recommended distance of a metre. Similar arrangements will be in place to keep students safe when classroom instruction resume.

And, we have an added health measure--a UV air filtration system in all rooms. This is not a bulky air purifier but a sleek electronic gadget that one might not even notice!

When the government lifted some of the restrictions of the MCO in May, we continued to work from home while staff that needed to work out of the office came in on designated days.

A [KPMG study](#) not unsurprisingly shows overwhelming support among employees for WFH (Working from Home) with business owners only slightly less enthusiastic. Productivity, the study shows, is actually higher when employees have high speed internet access and use ICT tools available on the web to communicate with colleagues.

The Covid-19 accelerated our plan to offer courses online. Through the past months, our academic staff have worked at digitalising courses and moving from in-person instruction to online teaching. While adapting to the new digital workspace and adopting the new tools, some teachers miss the personal teacher to student contact and the personal contact with colleagues that allow for a free exchange of ideas.

Covid-19 has heightened our fear of infectious diseases. It will also change the way we teach and the environment we work in apart from making us mindful of the health and hygiene measures necessary to stay safe. So, wash your hands regularly and observe social distancing in public places to reinforce what Ernawati, our cleaner of 17 years, will do to disinfect the pantry, washrooms, and classrooms throughout the work day.

-End-