

FAQ
on the current situation in schools/nurseries
during the coronavirus pandemic

The start of the new nursery/ school year comes right in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. The following contains answers to the most frequently asked questions posed to teachers and educators, parents and students, to help you avoid time consuming searches or enquiries. In urgent cases, please use the central contact number **0241/510051**.

1. What steps are being taken in nurseries/ schools if a COVID 19 infection is suspected?

Organisational measures such as quarantine requirements for individuals, groups, classes, years or even the closure of an institution or parts of it are performed only after they have been ordered by the department of health and once an individual examination of the situation has been conducted.

In the event of symptoms (e.g. fever, dry cough, breathing problems, loss of taste/smell, sore throat or body aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhoea), the affected person should definitely stay at home.

If symptoms (including mild ones) occur, the management of the school/nursery must inform the parents of the absolute necessity of consulting a family doctor or paediatrician. Quarantine and isolation – including those of contact persons – should only be implemented once instructions have been issued by the department of health.

2. What happens if a student/toddler tests positive for SARS-Cov2?

School student:

According to RKI recommendations, if the distance and hygiene rules have been strictly adhered to, it is unlikely that the school will be host to any K1 contact persons (i.e. close contact persons). This applies in particular if a mouth and nose cover (everyday mask, etc.) was worn with contact distances under 1.5 m, i.e. in high schools. The department of health will contact the school management in order to determine this.

The department of health will always contact the person who tested positive, or their legal guardian, to enquire whether there has been close contact with others either at home or at work/school.

Therefore, the prescribed class seating plan documentation will be required for better traceability.

The number of K1 people in primary school depends to a large extent on the hygiene concept of the school in question. By reducing the number of mixed groups and adherence to stricter contact avoidance, e.g. by use of a given seating arrangement for class, the number of close contact persons can be lowered.

Nursery toddler:

In the case of nursery schools (in regular operation without distance rules and masks), if a positive case is confirmed in writing, the building/ parts of the building will be closed until all K1 cases have been identified, contacted and quarantined. The nursery school provider will be informed by the school management once it has been contacted by the department of health.

Please note: As the department of health will contact every reported K1 person and implement the necessary measures, there is no need for enquiries in the meantime.

3. What happens if a teacher/educator tests positive for SARS-Cov2?

The same applies to teaching staff.

However, especially amongst the teaching staff and especially in the rooms of the teaching staff (staff room, etc.), attention should be paid to compliance with distance rules or mouth and nose coverings should be used if they cannot be maintained. The distance rules must be given priority; A fixed, documented seating plan also makes sense.

As in the classrooms, the rooms should be ventilated regularly and well.

Infection spreaders in nurseries/schools are mainly adults – e.g. at team meetings or during breaks! Explicit reference to the observance of the AHA rules should be made regularly!

4. What are the recommendations for physical education/ swimming lessons?

Physical education should be given outdoors as a priority until the autumn break.

Sufficient ventilation of sports halls is essential, and can be achieved with regular cross-ventilation. Since there is a lower risk of infection via smear infection, door handles and similar contact surfaces should be disinfected in a targeted manner instead of extensive cleaning. Shared sports equipment can be used, but it is good practice to clean the equipment before and after use and wash the hands of the students.

In most cases, swimming lessons in public facilities should not be offered before the autumn holidays due to special problems (encounters with other bathers, school transport to the swimming pool, changing room situation etc...).

5. Are schools/nurseries closed if a student/teacher or toddler/educator tests positive for SARS-Cov2?

The department of health decides on the quarantine/isolation of children, pupils and teaching staff/educators based on the hygiene measures of the schools/nurseries.

School:

If it is unclear whether the hygiene and distance rules have been observed in individual cases, individual groups/classes may have to stay away from lessons. In the meantime, the department of health will identify close contact persons (see above). These are placed in quarantine. The other students/teachers can then participate in class again.

Because a mask is required in high schools, general school closure is very unlikely.

Nursery school:

Since distance rules cannot be maintained in nurseries, the department of health makes closures on a group basis. The children/educators in this group are generally viewed as close contact persons (K1) and will be placed in quarantine, as 15 minutes of close contact ("face to face") is assumed for each group member. If the children have contact with other groups, e.g. during play, the department of health will decide whether the entire facility needs to be closed. This then applies for the duration of the contact person follow-up, so to avoid this groups should be kept apart.

6. Do toilets, offices or desks have to be disinfected separately if a student/teacher tests positive for SARS-Cov2?

No. However, thorough cleaning of all of the areas used is necessary.

7. How are the masks provided by the state/municipalities used in schools?

The FFP2 masks for teaching staff and students are administered by the school management and used as a reserve. In view of the current temperatures and the considerable breathing problems, FFP2 masks should only be used as a secondary option, especially for younger students. Everyday masks offer adequate protection – especially if they are worn by everyone!

8. How are non-event-related tests carried out by educators?

Regardless of the employer, all staff at schools and nurseries are entitled to voluntary tests outside of working hours every 14 days. The corresponding form is filled out for all staff by the nursery/school management. Tests are carried out by resident doctors. The department of health is not involved.

9. How can school cafeterias be operated in view of the considerable restrictions?

In school cafeterias, it is often not possible to maintain the required distances. Staggered meal times or packaged food for consumption in classes offer alternatives. Additional disposal options for leftover food must be provided in classrooms and the return of dishes must be organised. The school management decides on the food supply. Fixed seating arrangements are recommended (e.g. for each class).

10. Can teaching equipment such as microscopes etc. be used?

The same applies here as for sports equipment. Students may use equipment, but it should be disinfected or cleaned with a wet cleaning agent before and after. In addition, the students should wash their hands thoroughly before and after.

11. What happens if a warning is received via the coronavirus app?

Anyone who receives a warning on the coronavirus app can be tested **immediately** by their family doctor , regardless of whether a series test was recently performed during the biweekly school staff tests. Only the department of health decides on a formal quarantine.

Version: 18.08.2020 – this FAQ list will be updated regularly.

Additional information at:

<https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/themen/schulsystem/angepasster-schulbetrieb-corona-zeiten>

<https://www.mags.nrw/coronavirus>