

FAQ List (date: 31.08.2020)
on the current situation in schools/nurseries
during the coronavirus pandemic

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 contact the hotline 0241/510051 or infektionsschutz@staedteregion-aachen.de.

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, grades or even the closure of a facility or parts thereof are only performed following an order from the health department and after individual examination of the situation.

In case of a simple “cold”, the parents/guardians can initially care for the child at home for 24 hours. If there is improvement and no further symptoms arise, the child may then attend the school/nursery again. The following diagram is helpful for parents:

<https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/system/files/media/document/file/Erkrankung%20Kind%20Schaubild.pdf>

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 such symptoms occur, the school/nursery management must inform parents of the urgent need to consult a family doctor or paediatrician. **Quarantine and isolation** – including those of contact persons – **should only be implemented following relevant instructions from the Department of Health.**

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

In the case of nurseries and schools (in normal operation without social distancing and masks), parts of the building will be closed until all K1 cases have been identified, contacted and quarantined if a positive case has been confirmed in writing. **Care is taken to ensure that only the smallest possible group** (infectious

contacts) is closed, i.e. usually the school class in question or the respective group in daycare centres that run a separate-group model. Therefore, e.g. in nurseries, separate-group models must be maintained during free play etc. whenever possible.

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 is especially true if a mouth-nose cover (everyday mask, etc.) was worn when the distance was less than 1.5 m. The Department of Health will contact the school management in order to determine this. In such cases, the prescribed seating plan documentation in the classes is necessary for better traceability.

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.

The number of K1 people in school depends to a large extent on the hygiene concept of the school in question. The fewer groups that are mixed and the more strictly the AHA rules are followed, the fewer the number of close contacts.

The nursery or school provider will be informed by the management once it has been contacted by the Department of Health.

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.

Please note: It is essential to ensure that the names of any positive cases are not disclosed for data protection reasons, provided the person concerned or their legal guardian has not given their explicit consent to this. This also applies if the management knows the name internally.

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

The same applies to staff at schools and nurseries.

However, especially among staff members and, in particular, staff rooms (teachers' rooms, social rooms, etc.), attention should be paid to compliance with social distancing rules, while mouth-nose coverings should be used if distancing cannot be maintained. Social distancing rules must be given priority; a fixed, documented seating plan is also required here.

Particular caution applies if staff commute from risk areas. In such cases, it is strongly advised to wear a face mask or to strictly adhere to the social distancing rules.

The rooms of the teaching staff should be thoroughly ventilated on a regular basis as with classrooms.

The main carriers of infection in nurseries/ schools are adults – for example, 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 break 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 social distancing rules have been observed in individual cases, individual groups/ classes must remain absent from lessons. **The Department of Health will decide on this.** 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. Please note that loss of earnings according to the IFSG is only possible for

parents caring for sick children in case of measures that have been ordered by the Department of Health.

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 are placed in quarantine, as 15-minute 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 measure applies for the duration of the contact person follow-up period and may only be avoided if groups do not meet during free play or other activities.

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. When and how are first-level contact persons informed about testing?

If a group/class is closed, the parents/guardians of the children identified as first-level contact persons are informed about the upcoming measures. An information letter from the Department of Health is available in several languages and should be distributed to the parents via the school/nursery management. It contains information on the quarantine, loss of earnings of parents caring for children and any contact person testing performed by a team from the Department of Health.

8. 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 considerable breathing resistance, FFP2 masks should only be used as a secondary option, especially with younger students. General masks offer sufficient protection – especially if they are consistently worn by everyone involved!

9. 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.

10. 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).

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

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

12. How should rooms be ventilated?

The best way to ventilate the air in a room is via cross ventilation. During cross ventilation, the doors and windows should be opened as wide as possible for 5–10 minutes. Effective cross ventilation after every school lesson (45 min.) is significantly more effective (and energy saving) than permanently keeping windows open. Continuous drafts should be avoided, especially in the coming cold months.

13. 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.

Please also be aware of the rules in the current school email:

<https://www.schulministerium.nrw.de/ministerium/schulverwaltung/schulmail-archiv/archiv-2020/31082020-informationen-zum-schulbetrieb>

Version: 31.08.2020 – this FAQ List is regularly updated and can be downloaded from the StädteRegion website (www.staedtereion-aachen.de) under the heading “Coronavirus latest”.

Additional information at:

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

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