

To the parents
of Berlin students

Dear Sir or Madam, dear Parents,

The battle against the COVID-19 pandemic is having a global impact on 2020. Germany and Berlin have so far coped well with this unprecedented challenge. Many of you have helped by taking care of your children during the day care and school closings. That was very stressful for many Berlin families, but it made a significant contribution to containing the pandemic, for which I am very grateful!

Because of your contribution, we in Berlin are also able to return to a cautious normality. Nevertheless, this week your child will start a new school year, during which containing the COVID-19 pandemic will play a major role. Every school has developed its own hygiene plan in accordance with statewide guidelines. Wearing a mouth & nose mask, regular hand washing and periodic airing of rooms, limiting contact and other organisational measures will help to keep the risk of infection in our schools as low as possible. You will find a brief overview on the next page and a great deal more information in several languages on our website. My urgent request to you is that you stay informed and support your child in following all the rules and guidelines. It is only in this way that we can all ensure the normal operation of our schools.

Your child has a right to an education, personal development as well as good prospects for their future. We are working on this with you and the entire school staff, even during this pandemic. It can happen that things may get “choppy” during this school year at your school and that the pandemic will again make more learning at home necessary or even the temporary closing of individual classes or schools. If this is the case, I’m already asking for your understanding, patience and pragmatism. Today, we still are not able to know how the infection process will play out in the future. We must, therefore, make every effort to break the chains of infection and bear in mind the education as well as health of our children.

With kind regards,



Sandra Scheeres

Senator for Education, Youth and Family

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



How will school start after the summer holidays?

With the beginning of the 2020/21 school year, Berlin schools will offer organised, continuous instruction for all students. This normal operation will include regular instruction, remedial and cohort instruction as well as additional mandatory school offerings and activities. Extracurricular and supplemental support and guidance (all-day services and after-school) will also take place again. School lunch will be offered.



Must mouth & nose masks be worn?

Except for the instruction and implementation of supplemental support and supervision, the mandatory wearing of mouth & nose masks in enclosed spaces will apply in all schools. This obligation will not apply to individuals who cannot wear mouth & nose masks due to a health impairment. A mouth & nose mask will not be required on school playgrounds or during outdoor activities. Like all non-school individuals, parents will always need to wear a mouth & nose mask.



What other hygiene rules will apply?

Every school has created an individual hygiene plan based on the statewide sample hygiene plan. Hygiene rules such as regular hand washing and periodic airing of rooms must be followed. Direct physical contact should be avoided as much as possible. The previous minimum distance of 1.5 metres has been suspended in schools.



What will happen in the event of a COVID-19 case at school?

The appropriate public health department will arrange an at-home quarantine and will promptly determine in each individual case what additional measures will be necessary. These may include, for example, the temporary closing of individual classes, courses or the school. All students who have to learn at home will receive regular and mandatory guidance and support through their school.



What will the Berlin testing strategy look like?

The entire Berlin school staff can be tested at no charge and in a timely manner even without symptoms. In addition, two major scientific studies with multiple tests are already under way in selected Berlin schools.



Who must come to school? What will apply to risk groups?

Compulsory school attendance in principle applies to all students during the new school year. Students who, due to an underlying illness, may have an increased risk for a severe course of the disease in case of a COVID-19 infection (risk group) must credibly show this by presenting an appropriate medical certificate. In this case, school-guided learning at home will take place until further notice. This will also apply if another person living in the student's household belongs to a risk group.



What will apply to music and sports instruction?

Instruction will take place in these subjects, but direct physical contact should be avoided. Instruction should take place as far as possible outdoors. The currently valid regulations can be found in the sample hygiene plan.



Will school trips still take place this year?

School trips within as well as outside of Germany may again be booked and carried out. This does not apply to school trips to risk areas specified by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) or the German Federal Foreign Office.



Where can I find further information?

Constantly updated additional and more detailed information and documents, such as the sample hygiene plan or a guidebook for parents for learning at home, are available at www.berlin.de/sen/bjf/go/coronainfo-schule. You can also find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.