Classroom teaching from 11 May 2020

The Department of Education welcomes the Federal Council's decision, that from 11 May onwards, face-to-face teaching at schools for children of compulsory school age will be possible again under certain conditions.

As soon as the Federal Council has made a final decision on 29 April as to whether and under which circumstances classroom teaching can be held, the Department of Education will provide information on how to proceed for schools in the Canton of Zurich.

Corona and School

a) The Federal Council has decided to discontinue teaching in all schools in Switzerland. How long will this measure last?

The Federal Council has banned lessons requiring attendance in schools, universities and other educational institutions. This ban will apply for the time being until 11 May 2020. On 29 April, the Federal Council will provide information on the conditions under which classroom teaching can be held again.

b) Why are primary schools not closed altogether?

Lessons requiring attendance in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools will be discontinued as a result of the Federal Council's decision. This includes all school services (lessons, support programs etc.). Students stay at home whenever possible.

For students who, in exceptional cases, cannot be looked after at home, the schools will set up a childcare service. No child shall not be looked after.

It is specifically important that particularly vulnerable persons such as grandparents are protected by not including them in childcare. It is also important to ensure that people working in health care, security or public transport can continue to work.

The course of the disease is usually harmless for children; unlike the elderly, they are not at risk.

c) How can it be ensured that there is no risk of infection for children or teachers in primary school care?

Schools should avoid forms of care that require close physical contact. It is important that schools continue to comply with the hygiene rules of the Federal Office for Public Health (FOPH). Teachers who are not bound by the attendance requirement can also take other measures such as commuting outside rush hours, working from home and holding virtual meetings and conferences.

School staff who belong to a risk group (age, previous illness, etc.) must be released from active involvement in the provision of care. These persons work at home as part of their job assignment or support the care service in the background (e.g. for coordination tasks, telephone calls, information and communication for the school).
**d) Who needs to be informed when a child in care has been tested positive for COVID-19?**

If distance and hygiene measures have been observed, the risk of infection is small. The school management nonetheless informs all teachers, respectively the care team. People from the risk group (with previous illness or older than 65) should stay at home.

If the hygiene measures and the distance of 2 meters could not be observed, there is a risk of infection.

1. The school management will inform all parents of the affected childcare group that a confirmed case of corona has occurred.
   - If another child in the affected childcare group shows symptoms, the whole family goes to self-quarantine for 10 days. (Link to the FOPH website: German)
   - Healthy children without symptoms may keep visiting the care facility.
   - Children with previous illnesses such as diabetes, immunodeficiency or lung problems should contact their pediatrician to discuss the further procedure.
   - The school management will inform the teachers, respectively the care team of the affected childcare group that a confirmed case of corona has occurred.

2. If there has been close contact with a student, the school management can take case-related measures (e.g. home office can be ordered for the persons concerned as a precautionary measure).
   - If someone shows first symptoms, this person and all persons living in the same household are obliged to self-isolation.

**e) Who needs to be informed when a mother or a father has been tested positive for COVID-19?**

The school physician will carry out a risk assessment. He or she determines whether there was close contact with the teachers or caregivers and whether the affected children had close contact with other children from the care group and the care team when the symptoms broke out.

If there was no close contact, no information is necessary since no one was at risk of infection. The affected family must stay at home in accordance with FOPH recommendations (10 days after the onset of symptoms and 48 hours after the end of symptoms)

If the hygiene measures and the distance of 2 meters could not be observed, there is a risk of infection.

1. The school management will inform all parents of the affected childcare group that a confirmed case of corona has occurred.
   - If the own child shows symptoms, the whole family goes to self-quarantine for 10 days.
   - Healthy children without symptoms may keep visiting childcare.
   - Children with previous illnesses such as diabetes, immunodeficiency or lung problems should contact their pediatrician to discuss the further procedure.
2. The school management will inform the teachers, respectively the care team of the affected childcare group that a confirmed case of corona has occurred.

- If there has been close contact with a student of the affected family, the school management can take case-related measures (e.g. home office can be ordered for the persons concerned as a precautionary measure). If someone shows first symptoms, this person and all persons living in the same household are obliged to self-isolation.

f) Where do I find up-to-date information on coronavirus and the situation in Switzerland?

The Federal Office for Public Health provides up-to-date information on its website www.bag.admin.ch

**Waiving report card grades**

The schools in the Canton of Zurich have suspended classroom teaching since mid-March and exams are not graded. The Educational Board has therefore decided not to give any grades at the end of the school year.

You can find detailed information and considerations in the Educational Board Resolution.

Progress reports in special needs education:
Pursuant to § 10.2 of the Report Card Regulations, progress reports on grounds of adapted learning objectives do not have to be, but can be issued if it appears necessary and useful for further planning of measures in special needs education.

**Childcare and Parents**

The Government Council of the Canton of Zurich has issued a decree obliging the municipalities to ensure a minimum level of childcare provision. This particularly ensures the care of the children of parents whose work is indispensable for the provision of the population. Link to the ordinance.

In addition, the municipalities are obliged to ensure a minimum level of childcare provision for pre-school children. In the pre-school sector, they can oblige private funding bodies to run a daycare center.

a) Is the municipality obliged to set up additional childcare services because of corona?

On March 3, 2020, the government Council of the Canton of Zurich has issued a decree obliging the municipalities to ensure a minimum level of childcare provision: This particularly ensures the care of the children of parents whose work is indispensable for the provision of the population.
The principle that no child can be left unattended keeps applying. In individual cases, childcare can therefore be provided in additional emergency situations. In case of doubt, please consult with the Office of Elementary Education.

In addition, the municipalities are obliged to ensure a minimum level of childcare provision for pre-school children. In the pre-school sector, they can oblige private funding bodies to run a daycare center.

b) **Which professions are covered by the term “indispensable for the provision of the population”?**

For elementary schools, the ordinance means:

Students are looked after at home whenever possible.

Children of parents, whose occupation is indispensable for the provision of the population, are looked after in school if the parents notify a need.

This includes the following occupations:

- Health, nursing and geriatric care
- Security (police, fire brigade, law enforcement, military, civil defence, community service)
- Transport (public transport, taxi and private buses if it is for basic supply)
- Infrastructure (energy and water supply, waste disposal, telematics, cleaning excluding cleaning in private households)
- Logistics (including food supply and supply of other essential goods to the population)
- public administration or institutions with a public mission (in so far as the exercised task is indispensable),
- Media (excluding advertising and communication agencies)
- Children of parents, who rely on childcare for important reasons will be looked after as well. The latter particularly suggests itself for reasons of child protection, i.e. for children in socially or educationally difficult familial circumstances or children, for which external childcare was ordered by the Child and Adult Protection Services (KESB).

c) **How much time must the childcare cover?**

The provision of care is based on the parent's evidenced needs and can cover morning care, lunchtime care, care during class schedule time and afternoon care.
d) **Must childcare be provided during vacations as well?**

Yes, the “minimal” childcare defined in the ordinance of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich has to be provided during vacations too.

e) **Does the ban on assembling more than five people also apply to childcare?**

As long as one doesn't spend time in public areas with the children, this ban does not apply. Nonetheless, the Office of Elementary Education recommends limiting the group size to max. five children in childcare as well.

**Study at home: New service website of the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PH Zürich)**

The PH Zürich provides tools and information which have proven its worth in the university's practice and can be recommended with a clear conscience with regard to data privacy.

The weblink compilation provides recommendations for digital learning tools, offline activities, tips for distance learning and in particular material in foreign languages and much more. For the time being, the content is mainly aimed at primary school teachers and parents and is constantly being refined and completed.

Weblink compilation of PH Zürich for study at home (Information in German, some of the teaching material in 16 different languages)

**Distance learning (information from the Office of Elementary Education) FAQ**

**Will distance learning continue throughout the Spring holidays?**

No. Distance learning will be discontinued during Spring holidays. However, teachers may give their students books, puzzles or game ideas for the holidays.

2. **Do students have to remain in their residential municipality in spite of school closure in order to comply with compulsory education by means of distance learning?**

No. Distance learning can take place (almost) everywhere. The important thing is that school management and teachers know how to get in touch with the students, respectively their parents so they can send the assignments and the students can complete and solve them.
3. **Is there a risk of infection (via paper, plastic folders etc.) when learning resources are sent physically (by post, courier etc.)?**

According to the assessment of the school medical service, there is no risk of infection when physically sending the learning resources, provided that hygiene measures (washing hands, disinfecting plastic folders) are observed.

4. **Do the curricula have to be adhered to in spite of school closure due to corona?**

In principle, yes. What is relevant for how teachers structure their lessons is the achievement of the academic objectives corresponding to each educational stage. Nonetheless it is clear that the academic objectives cannot be achieved equally in all subjects and modules by distance learning.

5. **Can teachers set new academic objectives in spite of the cancellation of classroom teaching?**

Yes. The teachers set objectives based on curricula and teaching material and provide the students with feedback regarding their performance and development.

6. **Do parents replace teachers during distance learning?**

No. During distance learning too, the teachers are responsible for the students learning. Parents (or, depending on the family situation other care givers) make sure that the students receive their assignments and homework and work on those. They set up a workstation for their child and provide a day structure with study times, recess and leisure time.

7. **Does the lesson plan have to be adhered to in spite of the cancellation of classroom teaching due to corona?**

No. The teachers use the time allocation table with the mandatory time allotment per learning area as an orientation (with distance learning, this works better in mathematics than in exercise and sport, of course). As a rule, the teachers teach according to lesson plan. However, they are also free to group individual learning areas and organize educational projects.

8. **Do the core times (lessons from 8 to 12 o’clock) have to be kept despite Corona?**

No. By order of the Federal Government, no lessons are held in the schools. Even individual lessons are only held in exceptional cases; they are organized individually. As far as possible, teachers accompany their students with distance learning (and can also be employed for care), however, there is no requirement that this must take place during core times.
Central admission re-examinations (ZAP-Nachprüfung) will be conducted

The central admission re-examinations (ZAP) 2020 will be conducted on March 6 and 7, 2020. The students concerned, respectively their parents, were recently informed.

There will be no oral admission exams on the lines of the main ZAP exams. Those who fail the written exams by little, will be admitted directly to the trial period.

The re-examinations of the ZAP will be conducted decentralized: At their own facilities, each school will examine those who were unable to attend on the main exam date. The number of candidates per examination facility thus remains small, and compliance with hygiene regulations can be ensured.

Waiving of exams and promotion

a) Will additional students be admitted to the high schools owing to the omission of oral exams?

Owing to the omission of oral exams, canton-wide approx. an additional 130 students will be admitted to short-term high school, who would not have been admitted in a regular year. Distributed over the entire canton, this equals about four to five school classes.

The schools have enough capacity to admit those additional students.

b) Which consequences do those regulations have on the probation periods at high schools?

The new conditions apply to all students: All of them were not able to attend regular school lessons and were taught by means of distance study. We cannot yet asses how this will affect the probation period results concretely.

c) Will school reports be handed out at high schools this year as well?

At the end of spring semester 2020, all students will be admitted to the next grade with the current promotion state of fall semester 2019/20 (provisional or definite admission). This provisional or definite admission will persist until the end of fall semester 2020/21. The school reports will be adapted accordingly, details are currently being clarified and will be communicated as soon as possible.

d) Will the Matura exams take place?

This question is still being discussed. The Swiss Conference of High School Offices (SMAK) is doing everything in its power to ensure that, even in this exceptional situation, students in their final year can enroll at the universities of applied sciences, universities and federal vocational schools on the due date and receive their Matura certificates on time. The primary goal is to ensure free access to higher education.
Do the changes of admission terms for BM 2 also affect “Ausrichtung Wirtschaft und Dienstleistungen, Typ Wirtschaft” (focus economy and service, type economy)?

No. “Ausrichtung Wirtschaft und Dienstleistungen, Typ Wirtschaft” already provided for an exam-free admission. This provision remains unchanged.

Day nurseries/daycare centers and play groups - Questions & Answers (FAQ)

a) Who should make use of day nursery in the current situation?
In general, parents working in professions relevant to the system (health care, security etc.) should make use of the care facilities. The canton calls upon the individual responsibility of all parents. Whenever possible, children should be looked after at home. This is how parents help to ensure that places remain available for those children whose parents work in professions indispensable for the society to be functional or for those children depending on extra-familial childcare for other compelling reasons (particularly child protection).

b) Should day nurseries register short-time work?
This needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Further information can be obtained from the Office for Economy and Labour.

c) Does the assembly ban decided by the Federal Council also apply to day nurseries?
Yes, the day nurseries are also affected by this ban. The Federal Council prohibits gatherings of more than five people, particularly in public places, promenades or in parks. However, day nurseries and day foster care families must continue to operate in order to make sure parents are still able to work in professions relevant to the system. In doing so, they are supposed to comply with the increased hygiene and behavioral measures (in particular social distancing between co-workers, parents and children of other parents, as well as keeping groups as consistent as possible).

d) A day nursery care giver, a child or a parent shows symptoms of illness. What is the procedure?
Tests cannot be counted on at the moment; at present, tests are primarily being carried out on high-risk patients and health care personnel.

1. The sick persons and all persons living in the same household stay at home. They will not return to the day nursery before they have been without symptoms for 48 hours and if at least 10 days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.
2. The day nursery continues to operate normally.
3. If other people show symptoms, they will go into self quarantine as described under 1.

Please also observe the further information provided by the Federal Government.

e) A day nursery care giver, a child or a parent has tested positive. What is the procedure?
1. The sick person and all persons living in the same household stay at home and are in quarantine. They will not return to the day nursery before they have been without symptoms for 48 hours and if at least 10 days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.
2. The day nursery staff, parents and the supervisory authority (municipality) must be informed.
3. A case tested positive does not automatically force the day care center to close. It is also not compelling for all children from the same daycare center and its' employees to be quarantined. The procedure needs to be clarified in each individual case (Medical Emergency Number, Cantonal Physician).
4. A day nursery can only be closed in agreement with the responsible municipality. Please also observe the further information provided by the Federal Government.

f) Are day nurseries allowed to close if they do not wish to continue to operate?

In this extraordinary situation, day nurseries were obliged to keep operating. A day nursery could therefore only be closed in agreement with the authorizing government agency (municipality).

g) How do I deal with large staff shortages in my day nursery?

The organizing institutions are required to organize additional care staff for sick-leave replacement early enough. Day nurseries / daycare centers are called on supporting each other. Persons at risk (risk groups) must be protected in all cases and may not be on duty.

h) Should new children presently be admitted?

In the current situation, day nurseries should primarily be available to children of parents, who work in professions relevant to the system. Unless there are compelling reasons (need from parents working in professions relevant to the system), it is recommended not to admit any new children at present.

i) Can parents who work in professions relevant to the system spontaneously book additional days of childcare in the day nursery?

This option must absolutely be provided for. Spots in day nurseries are primarily supposed to be available for parents who work in professions relevant to the system to the extent in which they are needed.

j) May play groups keep operating?

In accordance with the decision of the Federal Council of March 16, 2020, play groups are among those services which must be discontinued until April 19, 2020.

k) Why does the Canton of Zurich not exclusively allow parents working in professions relevant to the system to keep sending their children to day nursery?

This is not within the competence of the Canton of Zurich. The Confederation clearly states that the cantons may not simply close day nurseries and only keep running a minimum service for parents in specific professions.

l) Who will pay for the day nurseries financial loss
For the operation of day nurseries, it is necessary to obtain a license. One of the criteria for the license being granted, is financial stability. We therefore assume that day nurseries are capable of bridging a certain time gap until funds from public authorities are available.

In this exceptional situation, the Swiss Confederation and the Canton have obliged the day nurseries to maintain operations. The day nurseries have therefore become a service relevant to the system. Consequentially, public authorities must make sure that businesses are indemnified.

The exact form of this financial compensation by organizing institutions is currently being clarified at various levels (Confederation, Canton, municipalities). Further details will be communicated shortly. The solutions under consideration are intended to ease the financial burden on organizing institutions and parents.

m) Can I turn my play group (music school, riding school...) into a day nursery?

Day nurseries are still subject to the duty to obtain a license. The municipalities are the authorizing government agencies.

**Children's and young people's homes and socio-pedagogical family support services - questions and answers (FAQ)**

a) Are there specialists with the Department of Health that can provide information, in particular on the special situation at children's and young people's homes?

The Department of Education regularly updates the information on this website.

The Medical Emergency Number is available for medical questions about coronavirus: 0800 33 66 55.

b) How can quarantined children be adequately cared for?

If possible, children who are quarantined because they have become ill themselves or because they have been in touch with an ill person should be kept physically separate from other residents. Parents are not allowed to visit in a quarantine situation. The care personnel must look after, care and provide activities for the children in accordance with the more stringent hygiene and behavior regulations.

c) Is it possible for care personnel to be quarantined together with the children affected in the institution?

The Youth and Career Counseling Office (AJB) recommends organizing institutions that staff members of the care team keep working in shifts, if possible, and be replaced at the end of their shift.

If, in exceptional cases, a possible solution should be for employees to go into quarantine together with the children they look after, the consent of the employees is required.
In this case, employees affected must be able to take appropriate rest periods in spite of being quarantined on site.

d) What happens when young people under quarantine leave the facility?
The management has to ensure that quarantined children and youth comply with the rules. If the quarantined children or youth leave the facility, it is up to the management to decide on exclusion from the facility, if need be, or on further consequences.

e) In case a children’s or youth home needs to be closed: Who is responsible for the accommodation of the children and youth affected?
As the supervisory authority, the Youth and Career Counseling Office (AJB) makes the necessary arrangements for the closure of a facility. If necessary, it provides support in the accommodation of minors.

f) What are the recommendations for baby and infant care?
The care of babies and infants is unthinkable without physical contact. Babies and infants are generally not part of the risk group. However, it is possible that they too become infected with the virus and spread it. The following therefore applies for institutions with this target group: Vulnerable care givers should be released from work whenever possible (see FOPH recommendations for the working world, information in German, French, Italian and English).

g) In case a children’s or youth home needs to be closed: Who is responsible for the accommodation of the children and youth affected?
As the supervisory authority, the Youth and Career Counseling Office (AJB) makes the necessary arrangements for the closure of a facility. If necessary, it provides support in the accommodation of minors.

h) Can a general prohibition of visitation be imposed?
The Youth and Career Counseling Office (AJB) does not impose a general prohibition of visitation for external visitors until further notice. However, in their special newsletter of March 13, 2020, they recommended that external visits be kept to a minimum. In the meantime, the AJB recommends imposing a prohibition of visitation for institutions that care for babies and infants.
The organizing institutions can impose further prohibitions of visitation at their own discretion.
The AJB recommends that children’s and young people's visits with their parents on weekends be kept to a minimum.

i) Can visitation rights be limited or prohibited by institutions even if they have been ordered by the Child and Adult Protection Services (KESB)?
Yes, the protection of children and youth as well as the staff has priority. Any restrictions on external visits should be communicated to the affected parents or the Children's Guardian in advance. If an institution prohibits external visits, the parents and the Children's Guardian must be informed.
j) Can children's and youth homes continue to maintain their internal school and educational services?

As of immediately, there is no more face-to-face teaching in children's and youth homes. In general, groups should not be mixed for the time being, as this would foster the spread of the virus. Therefore: All daily routine activities may therefore only take place within the facility's settings respectively within the home groups and with the corresponding social distance.

k) Can family visits in the context of socio-pedagogical family support still take place?

Socio-pedagogical family support (SPF) is an important child protection measure, supporting troubled families in crises and ensuring the well-being of the child. During this extraordinary situation, those families and children are particularly at risk and dependent on help. In line with child protection measures, socio-pedagogical family support should therefore be continued. However, when visiting families at home, special attention should be paid to compliance with the hygiene and behavior regulations (distance). If employees or family members show symptoms of illness or are part of the risk group, those families may not be visited. Alternatively, we recommend telephone contact.

For further questions:

**Hotline Federal Office for Public Health:** 058 463 00 00

**Primary schools:**
corona@vsa.zh.ch

**High schools and Vocational Education and Training School:**
Head of violence prevention and security division , infosuchtpraevention@mba.zh.ch

**Day nurseries:**
kitaszuerich@ajb.zh.ch

**Parent counseling:** Parent emergency number 24/7

Tel.: 0848 35 55 00.

E-mail 24h@elternnotruf.ch

**Corona-Hotline** (daily 07.00 to 23.00 h): 0800 044 117