

Information from the Frankfurt am Main Public Health Office:

Information for parents

(as at: 8 August 2020)

COVID-19

And the regular operation of schools and childcare facilities during the pandemic

Dear parents and families,

Following a difficult spring and what we hope have been relaxing summer holidays, all childcare facilities and schools are starting up their regular operations in a pandemic context. Our primary schools already went through the step-by-step process of resuming full operations in June, and our childcare facilities began their new year on 1 August. Our educational institutions have prepared extensively for the time following the summer holidays. Insofar as the development of the pandemic allows it, your children will once again attend childcare and school regularly.

In cooperation with the Federal State of Hesse, the city of Frankfurt has used the past few weeks to create the best and safest possible conditions in childcare and schools for you and your children and to prepare everything in such a way that we can minimise your concerns, provide clear procedures and communicate where responsibilities lie.

In this flyer, we have compiled for your information the general framework and the most important rules in the case of a coronavirus infection. We especially wish to draw your attention to the important information in this flyer about returning from regions with a high infection risk.

In addition, the links in this flyer will take you to any potential updates on the rules for returning travellers as well as updates on regions deemed to have a high coronavirus risk.

These precautions will serve to protect the health of all children and adults in our childcare facilities and schools. If you are uncertain about anything or have any questions, please consult your childcare facility or school, or your family doctor.

In the coming weeks we will continue to work together to ensure the health of all children and adults in Frankfurt's educational institutions. You can rest assured that the public health office and all other relevant authorities are prepared to ensure that your everyday routine and that of your children can resume once again — insofar as the evolution of the pandemic permits.

We thank you for your hard work and understanding over the past few months and wish you and your children a good, healthy start to the new school and childcare year.

Sylvia Weber

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Procedure in the event of a case at a school or childcare facility

Information concerning a person with a positive COVID-19 test will be reported by the lab to the public health office in the person's district of residence.

The public health office investigates and contacts the person who has tested positive as well as any of their contacts who may be at risk of infection, advises the affected persons, and issues any necessary orders. As part of this step, the infected person will be asked whether they were in a school or childcare facility during the period in which they could have contracted or spread the infection.

Should this be the case, the public health office will contact the administrators of the relevant school/facility. This may also take place in the evening or at the weekend.

Depending on the specific circumstances, orders issued by the public health office in the event of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in a school/childcare facility may include:

- Contact tracing
- Quarantine orders for individuals
- Testing
- Health inspections
- Interruption of in-person teaching / childcare or after-school youth services (which does not necessarily mean that everyone will be put in quarantine)

If, after comprehensive testing has been conducted in a facility (e.g. in a class, group or in the entire facility), no further positive results are anticipated, the administrators of the school or childcare facility will be informed of this.

Negative results from comprehensive testing, e.g. in a school, cannot be reported back to individuals.

As a matter of principle, any orders issued are communicated to school administrators, who in turn communicate them to the providers of after-school care, youth services and the school community. In the case of childcare facilities, orders are communicated to the provider organisations, who in turn inform the heads of individual childcare facilities as well as the parents.

Germany has some of the highest performing public health services in the world.

The Frankfurt Public Health Office can look back on many years of experience in managing disease outbreaks in educational institutions.

Controlling the spread of disease always takes the top priority, which means interrupting chains of infection. Under these circumstances, the public health office must treat all other concerns as secondary.

Returning travellers (as at: 8 August 2020)

Travellers returning from other countries must observe the following:

- Anyone returning to Germany from another country (regions not deemed high-risk) can be tested for the coronavirus free of charge within 72 hours of entering the country. Travellers entering from regions with a high coronavirus risk must take a test.
- Travellers from high-risk regions who have filled out and submitted a passenger locator form (Aussteigekarte) are not required to report their entry to their public health office. Travellers from high-risk regions who have not filled out a passenger locator form must immediately report their entry into the country to the public health office in their district of residence.

- The Robert Koch Institute lists the regions currently considered to have a high coronavirus risk. This list can be found at www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete_neu.html

You can find current information on this topic on the informational website maintained by the city of Frankfurt am Main: www.frankfurt.de/coronavirus-fragen-und-antworten

(Hygiene) Recommendations

The Robert Koch Institute, the federal states and the public health offices issue the legal requirements and recommendations for preventing disease.

During the regular operation of schools and childcare facilities, the minimum physical distance cannot always be observed; nonetheless, the general hygiene rules must be followed whenever possible.

As a general rule, the public health office recommends:

- Maintaining physical distance (>1.5 m) whenever reasonable/possible
- Wearing of masks/face coverings if physical distance requirements cannot be consistently observed (not applicable to children under six years)
- Frequent ventilation of indoor areas
- Good hand-washing practices
- As much as possible: minimising contact – reduced group sizes and consistent cohorting

Runny nose and other symptoms in children/youth

Even prior to the pandemic, the public health office has long been familiar with the following situation: A child is sent home due to vague symptoms such as a cough or runny nose. The child's parents take a different view of their child's health situation and bring the child back to school/childcare the next day.

There is a danger that children with a mild common cold will be excluded from school or childcare during the pandemic. We must not allow this to happen.

The general rule is that sick children (and adults) should stay home. If there is any uncertainty as to what constitutes "sick", we recommend that the decision be taken on an individual basis in consultation with your paediatrician or family doctor.

Communication between schools/childcare and parents always works best in the context of a relationship based on mutual respect and trust, and this remains true in the current situation. In general, parents will not be required to provide doctor's notes on the health status of their children or youth; such notes will only be necessary in certain individual cases.