

Hessisches Kultusministerium Postfach 3160 65021 Wiesbaden

To all
parents and legal guardians

Wiesbaden, 12 April 2021

School and teaching activities from 19 April 2021

- Continuation of alternating teaching for grades 1 to 6 and pre-classes with emergency supervision
- Continuation of distance learning for grades 7 and above
- Continuation of face-to-face teaching for final-year classes, year Q2 and for preliminary courses at evening classes and the Hesse College
- New: negative test result as a compulsory requirement for participation in face-to-face teaching and emergency care.

Dear parents and guardians, dear
pupils,

unfortunately we all had to start the Easter holidays with considerable uncertainty because we could not foresee how school would continue from 19 April onwards. Although the vaccinations which have already begun - including those for teachers - are gaining momentum, the situation remains very difficult. It is therefore necessary that **school and teaching activities initially continue in the same way as they did before the Easter holidays.**

In specific terms, this means:

1. **Years 1 to 6** as well as the preliminary classes will continue to be taught in split learning groups in alternating teaching from 19 April 2021.

Pre-school courses can take place in compliance with hygiene and spacing rules.

Emergency care for years 1 to 6 will continue as before.

2. **Years 7** and above will continue to be taught in distance learning.

This decision in particular was anything but easy for us, but it is unfortunately unavoidable in view of the current infection rate. I am aware of what the students from Year 7 onwards and you as families have had to achieve and endure for many weeks without face-to-face teaching. This is impressive and something to be greatly admired.

We have drawn up offers of assistance regarding mental health for all Hessian students in cooperation with the state student council. The letter and an accompanying video can be found on the website of the Hessian Ministry of Culture at <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/schulsystem/aktuelle-informatio-nen-zu-corona> .

It is my heartfelt intention to be able to give the pupils from year 7 onwards prospects for the future as soon as possible. I will continue to work to ensure that we can facilitate another opening step as soon as practicable as vaccinations progress, graduating classes leave and compulsory testing is introduced. We will also launch a comprehensive package of compensation measures so that we can offer the greatest possible support to pupils in these years in particular.

3. **Final year classes and the students in the Q2 course term** remain in face-to-face classes as a matter of principle. This does not apply to students in the Q4 course term for whom the course phase ended on 1 April 2021.

The written Abitur examination has priority which means one or more classes can be taught in distance learning if necessary, especially on days with a large number of exam candidates, in order to relieve the burden on the schools. Your school will inform you about this.

4. **Final examinations, including written examinations for the state Abitur, will take place as planned.** I can assure you that the safety of the pupils is of course always in focus here.

5. **Pupils with an entitlement to special educational support requiring special care** will continue to be taught at school in consultation with the parents.

6. Please note that **regionally differing regulations** may still be possible.

Dear parents, it is a matter of great concern to me that you are able to understand the decisions made by the Hessian state government in this extraordinary situation. We all want normality more than ever, both at school and in our private lives. The continuing high number of infections poses a great challenge to us all and, especially, to our health system. The RKI estimates the health risk of the population as a whole as being very high due to the persistently high number of cases and the currently accelerating rise in incidence.

The current situation requires the use of all available infection prevention measures to maintain the face-to-face teaching - at least in the same form as up to the Easter holidays - which is so important for the development of your children. These are

firstly, as in the past: compulsory wearing of a mouth-nose covering in class, in emergency care and on the entire school premises from year 1, observance of minimum spacing, hand hygiene and regular ventilation.

In addition, from 19 April 2021, **verification of a negative test result** will be a mandatory requirement for participation in face-to-face teaching and emergency supervision. The obligation to provide a negative test result does not just apply to pupils, of course, but also to teachers and all other persons who have contact with pupils. With the tests our schools now have an instrument available which, according to the experts, enables face-to-face teaching to be carried out even with increased incidence values as long as minimum spacing and other hygiene regulations are observed.

You have already received a letter from the Hessian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs dated 30 March 2021 regarding the self-tests through your school. You can also find it at <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/schulsystem/umgang-mit-corona-an-schulen/fuer-schulleitungen/schreiben-schulleitungen/durchfuehrung-von-antigen-selbsttests-zum-nachweis-des-coronavirus-sars-cov-2-in-schulen>.

What is new is that participation in face-to-face teaching and emergency care will only be possible in future if a negative test result no older than 72 hours is presented.

You can decide yourself whether your child takes a self-test at school or a so-called citizens' test at one of the test centres outside school - pupils of legal age decide this themselves. Both offers are free of charge. However, a self-test carried out at home is not sufficient verification.

Pupils who do not provide the school with verification of a negative test result and do not make use of the self-testing offer at school must leave the school premises and will only be taught using distance learning. If you decide against a test, please deregister your child from face-to-face teaching in writing. In this case, your child will spend learning time at home and receive appropriate assignments from the school. **However, you cannot expect supervision by teachers as in face-to-face teaching.**

I therefore urge you to allow your child to take part in the tests at school or to enable testing.

There are exceptions to the obligation to provide verification of a negative test result with respect to final examinations. You will receive additional information about this from your school in the next few days.

If your child is to provide verification by taking the self-test at school, it is required that he/she submits the signed consent form to the school. You will receive this from your school. Pupils will be supervised by their teachers during the tests. The self-tests can basically be used without the assistance of specialist staff because the smear is taken directly in the anterior nasal region. The test is therefore much less unpleasant than the quick tests used so far. The result can be read after 15 minutes. We have compiled some frequently asked questions with answers (FAQs) for you on the Hessian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs website. You can find information on how to carry out the self-tests and child-friendly explanations of the individual steps at the following links:

<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/mediathek/video-selbsttests-1873982>

<https://www.hamburg.de/bsb/14961744/torben-erklaert-den-coronatest/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0EqaSBurX0&t=47s> (Video from the Augsburg *Puppenkiste*)

If the self-test is negative, the usual hygiene rules still apply since the test result can only represent a snapshot. In the event that children and young people test positive at school, the school has made arrangements to quietly supervise the affected pupil until you collect him/her from school. The **health authority** will be informed by the school on the basis of the Infection Protection Act. In addition, a free PCR test must then be carried out in a test centre or a doctor's practice. Please contact

your GP practice or one of the testing centres on 116 117 to make an appointment for such a PCR test. Your child, or yourself as an adult pupil, must remain in quarantine until the result of the PCR test is available; after the result of the PCR test is available the health authority will decide on any further measures that may be necessary, especially in the case of a positive PCR test result.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear parents and guardians, dear pupils, I sincerely hope that I can bring you much more positive news in my next letter. It remains my aim to take the next opening steps as soon as the infection situation permits. I would also like to thank you on behalf of the Hessian state government for your perseverance and understanding.

With best regards and all good wishes,



Prof. Dr. R. Alexander Lorz

This letter will be available in simple language over the next few days, as well as in

Arabic

English

Polish

Russian

Turkish

at <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/schulsystem/umgang-mit-corona-an-schulen/fuer-eltern/elternbriefe/schul-und-unterrichtsbetrieb-ab-dem-19-april-2021>