



To all students aged 18 and over

**Dorothee Feller**

## **COVID and energy-saving measures in schools**

Dear Students,

I am writing to you today to inform you in plenty of time of possible changes to the regulations in connection with the COVID pandemic and the energy-saving measures currently being discussed in schools.

In the light of a possible intensification of the infection process in autumn and winter, the federal legislator has amended the German Infection Protection Act (IfSG) and opened up the possibility for the federal states to define protective measures. The Act now contains the following significant changes for schools:

In the period from 1 October 2022 to 7 April 2023, the federal states may require students from the fifth school year and staff at schools to wear masks under strict conditions. This rule does not apply to years 1 to 4. The state government will apply this authorisation in accordance with the requirements of the new Infection Protection Act if the infection situation should require it. Schools will be informed of this in good time. For now, though, the earlier recommendation to wear a mask will remain in place after the 2022 autumn holiday.

Our most important aim continues to be to maintain school operations and face-to-face teaching consistently because this is particularly important for the development of pupils' skills and their psychosocial development.

With regard to the testing strategy, the earlier and now successfully introduced recommendation of on-demand testing at home, i.e. only testing in the event of a suspected case, remains in place. In this context, many thanks to all of you for the calm and trusting way you handle the testing at home! The excellence with which you achieve this is an important contribution in maintaining face-to-face teaching.

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The state will continue to provide the antigen self-test kits. As before, students will receive the kits from school to use at home as and when required. If, while attending school, you have or develop obvious symptoms of a suspected case of COVID infection, the responsible teacher or caregiver will ask you to complete an on-demand test using a rapid antigen test. As before, it is not usually necessary to test at school if you are able to confirm to the school that you have already tested negatively at home on that day before coming to school.

In this respect, I shall continue to trust in your personal responsibility and assume that you will only come to school if you are healthy or – if you are experiencing mild cold symptoms – have received a negative result from a self-test.

With regard to the current gas supply situation, we are receiving more and more enquiries about the extent to which schools are being affected by the energy savings.

Due to the tense situation regarding energy supplies and the negative effects on us as citizens, on the economy and on industry, we are all called upon to save energy.

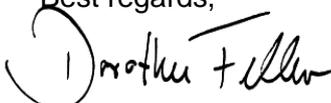
By the same token, even during this time we need to maintain the functional capability of our schools while also continuing to preserve the occupational safety of students and staff and a healthy learning climate. And so, in accordance with the assessment of the Federal Network Agency, schools are considered to be among what are referred to as "protected customers". In order to explain what this means, we have posted further information concerning the current legal situation in the education portal ([www.url.nrw/schulbetrieb-energieversorgungskrise](http://www.url.nrw/schulbetrieb-energieversorgungskrise)).

Dear Students,

On the part of the Ministry, we are doing everything we can to ensure that we continue to overcome these challenges well together in autumn and winter if we all continue to behave as consciously and responsibly as we have done in the past months. Thank you again for your support.

I hope you have a pleasant and relaxing autumn holiday.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dorothee Feller', written in a cursive style.

Dorothee Feller