



To
Parents and guardians
of all children attending school

Covid rules in schools from 10 August 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to you today to provide you with information about the Covid rules that will apply in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia from 10 August 2022.

Although the ongoing pandemic is currently causing high levels of infection, the number of people with serious illness – especially those patients who need intensive care – is low and remains stable at this level. The level of immunity in the population – which also includes school pupils and teachers – has also become much higher as a result of vaccinations and the number of people who have had a Covid infection. At the moment, this means we can pursue our social activities without major restrictions or complicated safety rules. In this phase of the pandemic, it is important that people show personal responsibility, based on their experience in dealing with the virus. This is true both in day-to-day life and when attending school.

As we know, an infection with the virus variant that is dominant at the moment can cause symptoms that mean a child will be unable to attend school for a few days. While this means Covid-19 is just like many other illnesses, it does make organising classes and teaching at the school very difficult in situations where a lot of pupils and teachers become af-

ected at the same time. The best way to handle this situation is to continue to show personal responsibility and follow effective rules for preventing infection. This approach will ensure that the health risks from the coronavirus pandemic will continue to be kept as low as possible in our schools. Schools will also be emphasising the need to take personal responsibility for dealing with the virus and actively supporting this approach. Social distancing should be used where it makes sense to do so. We also recommend washing hands regularly and wearing a face mask if possible. Frequent ventilation of classrooms will continue as before.

We have also adopted a new testing strategy: this will involve 'on-demand' testing of pupils at home. As a parent, this means that you should test your child (and keep your child home if they get a positive test result) if your child develops the typical kinds of symptoms for Covid-19 – like a cough, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste/smell or a high temperature.

Your local authority will provide the Covid-19 self-tests (rapid antigen tests) needed. The testing kits will be handed out to pupils by the school. These kits can then be used for voluntary on-demand self-testing at home. Schools will also be offering a test for pupils on the first day back at school.

If, while attending school, a pupil has or develops obvious symptoms of a respiratory infection – and therefore a suspected case of Covid infection – the child's teacher or caregiver will ask this child to take an on-demand test using a rapid antigen test. If the child was tested at home before school that day and got a negative test result, they will not normally need to be tested again. The child should show a confirmation of the negative test from their parent or guardian.

In this way, we are giving parents the opportunity to avoid situations where pupils need to be tested at school. If a child has symptoms, they can be tested at home before school and be given appropriate proof of the negative test result to take into school. In such cases, a second test at school will only be necessary if your child's symptoms obviously become much worse during the school day.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we continue our fight against the Covid pandemic in our schools, I will once again be relying on your effective cooperation with schools and school staff. I am convinced that we can hold the pandemic in check in our schools, and can work to reduce transmission if everyone takes responsibility for themselves and others. By now, we all know how this

can be done. All we have to do is to make sure we act accordingly whenever that may be necessary. Keeping our schools open as places of learning and interaction is in everyone's interests.

I wish you and your children a healthy and successful start to the 2022/2023 school year.

Best regards,



Dorothee Feller