

## **Who is obligated to wear a mask during school hours as of 26 October?**

As of 26 October 2020, all students must wear mouth and nose covering in school buildings and on school premises. Students in grade 5 and higher must also wear a mask during class and at their desks.

## **Do students in primary school also have to wear a mask?**

Students in primary schools do not have to wear mouth and nose covering provided they are in their respective class group in the classroom. The mask requirement remains in place in the rest of the school buildings and on school premises.

## **Who is exempt from wearing a mask during school hours?**

All persons in school buildings or on school premises during school hours are generally obligated to wear mouth and nose covering. This regulation does not apply to persons who cannot wear mouth and nose covering for medical reasons. These persons must be able to verify via medical attestation, which must be presented on request.

Students in primary schools do not have to wear mouth and nose covering provided they are in the classroom with their respective class group.

Furthermore, there is no mask requirement for teaching staff, care staff and other personnel if a distance of 1.5 metres from other persons within the room is maintained. The minimum distance does not have to be adhered to at conferences, meetings and when seated in teachers' lounges if the traceability as per § 2a paragraph 2 of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance is ensured via assigned seating and a seating plan.

A mask requirement is also not necessary at seats in school dining areas (as per § 14 paragraph 2 Coronavirus Protection Ordinance).

Students who participate in full-day care services and are located in the care spaces or in defined outdoor areas also do not have to wear mouse and nose covering. This also applies to care in fixed groups and when it is ensured that different care groups cannot intermingle.

Members of school cooperation committees do not have to wear a mask if a minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons within the same room is ensured. The minimum distance need not be adhered to if special traceability as per § 2a paragraph 2 of the Coronavirus Protection Ordinance is ensured.

## **Does my child also have to wear a mask in the school yard during breaks?**

The requirement for mouth and nose covering also does not apply when eating and drinking during breaks if the minimum distance of 1.5 metres from other persons on school premises is maintained or if food and drinks are being consumed at assigned seats in the classroom.

## **What are the regulations for proper ventilation during school hours?**

The ventilation of school rooms is a major, simple and effective method for reducing the risk of coronavirus infection via airborne pathogens. Schools in North Rhine-Westphalia will thus follow the most recent recommendations from the Federal Ministry for the Environment. These include 20 minutes of impact ventilation, cross ventilation wherever possible, and constant ventilation of rooms during breaks.

## **Are there new regulations in physical education?**

The state of the pandemic, which remains tense, does not allow for school athletics to be conducted without restrictions. Requirements for hygiene and infection protection are reasonable and must be considered with the utmost care. However, it is important that school athletics and physical education in particular are held in this current situation in order to provide opportunities for movement, to promote health, to provide a counterbalance to the extraordinary situation in schools, and to prepare for practical athletic examinations for school leaving certifications while opening up new paths of education.

Physical education will generally take place in gymnasiums following the autumn break due to the weather. A ventilation system that allows for the exchange of air and reduces the concentration of airborne particles in the gymnasium air is required to use the gymnasiums.

The situation of gymnasium usage will be analysed on site by the school boards in coordination with the responsible authorities and offices, and the gymnasiums will be cleared for use accordingly. Teaching staff shall actively facilitate cross ventilation by opening doors and/or windows. The partitions in gymnasiums used by multiple groups at a time must be lifted after each hour.

Further information can be found on the [webpages of the Ministry for Schooling](#).