

Office for Schools and Vocational Education
Postfach 76 10 48, D - 22060 Hamburg

To
the school management personnel
the educational personnel
the administration personnel
the GBS management
as well as all parents and guardians

By email

Department for Education
Thorsten Altenburg-Hack
Landesschulrat
Hamburger Str. 31, D-22083 Hamburg
Tel. (040) 4 28 63-0

Email: Thorsten.Altenburg-Hack@bsb.hamburg.de

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Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg Office for Schools and Vocational Education

(Englisch / English)

The latest information on the corona virus – including what to do about people returning from corona virus risk areas

Dear School Management Employees,
Dear GBS Management Employees,
Dear Administration Employees in the School Offices,
Dear Colleagues in the schools,
Dear Parents,

To contain the risk of infection and spread of the new corona virus, the Hamburg Health Authority and the Hamburg Education Authority have decided on a set of measures for all Hamburg schools. School administrations and everyone employed in the schools, along with the parents and pupils are required to follow and implement these measures. These measures come into force with immediate effect.

General information on managing with the corona virus in Hamburg

The Authority for Health and Consumer Protection has information on managing with the corona virus in Hamburg at www.hamburg.de/coronavirus. As well as the latest information on confirmed cases in Hamburg, hygiene tips, answers to frequently asked questions and general travel recommendations, there is also a review of how to act and how to report any issues – along with contact people, contact addresses and links.

All citizens can access information over the phone by dialling the Hamburg Hotline at 040 428 284 000 and – should any symptoms appear – by dialling 116117.

In parallel with this letter, the Office for Schools and Vocational Education is putting **FAQs that focus on Schools and Prevention** in place at www.hamburg.de/bsb/ and constantly updating this in the light of any questions from schools. For any questions to do with schools, parents should contact with the school concerned as before.

There will be a special handout for school management offices with information on how to proceed. This will be sent separately by email on Friday. Beyond that, school management offices can contact their respective school supervision authority at any time or address their questions to the dedicated corona@bsb.hamburg.de mailbox, where these are not answered in the handout or in the FAQs.

Over and above this, school managements are to report any suspicious cases as well as any confirmed cases of corona virus through this mailbox.

In these cases, the school managements are also to report to the responsible district health authorities (see also the section on school closures).

- Hamburg-Mitte 040 / 42854 - 4688
- Altona 040 / 42811 - 3001
- Eimsbüttel 040 / 42801 - 3519
- Hamburg-Nord 040 / 42804 - 2836
- Wandsbek 040 / 42881 - 2278
- Bergedorf 040 / 42891 - 2224
- Harburg 040 / 42871 - 2320

Access to schools for anyone returning from risk areas is forbidden for 14 days

Pupils from all schools (including all-day /GBS, ReBBZ and JMS) as well as all **school employees**, who are currently returning, or have returned in the last 14 days, from any area that has been assessed as a risk area within the last 14 days are not to take part in any school business – regardless of what symptoms they may have. They are to avoid any unnecessary contacts and stay at home as a precaution for 14 days (the 14 days are to be counted from the point in time of leaving the risk area).

Any contact to older or chronically ill people is to be avoided. Should any flu-like symptoms such as fever, coughing or breathing difficulties occur, the house doctor or the 116117 medical line should be contacted by phone to discuss how to proceed. These are the same measures that apply for people who come in contact with people with confirmed infections.

As of 10.03.2020, according to the definition from the Robert Koch Institute, the risk areas include all of Italy, Iran, China (Hubei province including the city of Wuhan) and South Korea

(Gyeongsangbuk-do province). Please be aware that the corona virus infection situation is constantly developing and, for this reason, the definition of the risk areas has changed and will continue to change (see also www.rki.de).

Any teachers who are returning from risk areas and show no symptoms while isolating themselves at home, and where there is an official interest, have the option to be given a corona virus test, four to six days after leaving the risk area. Should this prove to be negative, they can return to their work at the school.

Decisions about school closures are made exclusively by the public health authority

The closure of a school is a measure that should not be taken lightly in view of the considerable impact on everyone involved in and around the school and all the life in that town or city. That is why the total or partial closure and re-opening of a school, including any care that is currently on offer there, is exclusively decided on by the responsible health authority in that area. They can impose the partial or complete closure of a school on the school management on basis of § 28 of the German Infection Protection Law (IfSG). School management offices cannot close a school due to health issues without the approval of the health authority. In the case of a school closure, the school management informs the relevant school supervision authority immediately and sends the appropriate information to the dedicated corona@bsb.hamburg.de mailbox.

As a rule, schools are partially or completely closed if pupils or school employees have fallen ill from the corona virus. If any pupils or employees have only had contact with infected people or show signs of a cold or fever, the health authorities will weigh up precisely how strong the contacts or symptoms of illness are.

The decision to close a school is communicated through the district health authorities/BGV and the BSB in parallel. The BSB communicates back to the school management and provides information documentation for parents and personnel. The school management also informs caterers, GBS management or other organisations and/or active sports clubs operating at the school. Whether, and to what degree, the closure applies to all existing services at the school, is to be clarified with the district health authority in each case.

The school management must ensure that all colleagues can be reached by phone during the school closure. The school management passes on all the telephone numbers to the school supervision authority, through which all members of the school management can reliably be reached.

Teachers should maintain contact with the learner groups during the school closure to exchange teaching material. Beyond that they should use the time when the school is closed, as long as they are not ill themselves, to correct written performance assessments, update educational plans, develop examination tasks and prepare and follow up individual teaching units.

Any school events with more than 30 participants are cancelled

In March and April, all school events such as celebrations, sports days, concerts or plays with more than 30 participants are to be cancelled. Teachers' conferences can still take place, but whether and how the number of conferences and participants can be reduced should also be considered. This requirement can be extended over a longer period depending on how the situation develops.

Class outings and school exchanges in risk areas are forbidden

In March and April, travel bans for class trips and school exchanges apply in Hamburg for Italy, China and all additional risk areas as set out in the Robert Koch Institute definition (see above). These prohibitions currently apply up to and including 30.04.2020. Please be aware that the corona virus infection situation is developing and, consequently, the definition of the risk areas can change.

Decisions on any class trips in non-risk areas are made by the school management in consultation with the respective class management and class parent representatives in accordance with the guidelines for school trips from 20.04.2016. If, after consideration by the parties involved, any class trips are to be cancelled beyond the 30.04.2020, the decision is then supported by the responsible authority even if this results in legal disputes. If any class trips and school exchanges that are already booked for March and April are cancelled, or cancelled by a third party, schools can apply for a refund of the cancellation costs through the office for compensation payments in the education authority's legal department. The contact people are Mrs Manuela Wittenburg and Mrs Manja Voss, mailbox: schadensersatz@bsb.hamburg.de.

Otherwise the requirements in the guidelines for school trips apply. This states that pupils can be exempted from participation for important reasons in accordance with § 28, paragraph 3 of the Hamburg Schools Act. The school management then decides on the request from the parent or guardian.

Particular attention should be paid to hygiene regulations for all class trips, by the way, and joint trips with several classes should be implemented in such a way that the groups are kept separate as far as possible.

Hygiene regulations must be strictly observed

Everyone employed in the schools as well as the all-day service providers, all pupils and all additional people who regularly work at the school must carefully observe the hygiene advice from the Hamburg Health Authority and the Robert Koch Institute (see www.infektionsschutz.de/hygiene-tipps). School management personnel and teachers set a good example here, as well as ensuring that the pupils take the hygiene advice seriously and implement it. The caretakers and Schulbau Hamburg employees, in cooperation with the school management personnel, ensure that the washbasins are fully functioning, the soap dispensers are filled and that there are sufficient single-use towels in all WC facilities. Advice for washing hands correctly is also on display in all the wash rooms.

The following hygiene requirements must particularly be followed:

- No touching, embracing or shaking hands
- Don't touch your face with your hands, especially not your mouth and nose
- Keep a distance of two metres from any people with symptoms of illness – regardless of what illness
- Regularly wash hands carefully up to the wrists for at least 20 seconds (see <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/haendewaschen/>)
- Everyone must wash their hands before eating in the canteen
- Avoid touching any publicly accessible objects, such as door handles and lift buttons, with your full hand or fingers
- Cough and sneeze correctly: Sneeze into the crook of your elbow, cough into tissues, then dispose of the tissue immediately and wash your hands with soap (see <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/hygiene-tipps/hygiene-beim-husten-und-niesen/>)

- Do not share any tissues or pens (see <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/fileadmin/infektionsschutz.de/Downloads/Merkblatt-Bildungseinrichtungen-Coronavirus.pdf>).

Treating suspicious cases carefully

If any school employees or pupils have contact with another person who has tested positively for the corona virus, the teachers at the school are to send these employees or pupils home after consulting the school management. The school management then informs the local health authority and the BSB.

Should any school employees or pupils show any general symptoms of illness, they are also sent home by the school as before. Parents are notified as before, a corresponding note is made in the class register and the school management is also informed. The school management must be told if the symptoms are similar to those of the corona virus. **In such cases the school management informs the responsible district health authority and sends an appropriate message to the dedicated corona@bsb.hamburg.de mailbox.**

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, we are facing a situation that has never happened before. We must take all the necessary measures together – with a reasonable sense of proportion – to limit the spread of the corona virus and to protect older people, people with pre-existing conditions and people with immune deficiencies in particular. This will cost us all a certain effort in the next few weeks, but it will be worth it.

With this in mind, I wish you and ourselves plenty of strength in the coming weeks!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Re J.', written in a cursive style.