

# Primary schools

FAQs about schooling on COVID-19 alert

Based on Notice [No. 811/2020 of 21 August](#) and regulation [No. 864/2020](#) of 3 September from the Minister for Health.

## 1. What preventive measures are in place in primary schools?

Primary schools are operating normally, with the following preventive measures in place:

Social distancing - teachers and other staff must keep **a distance of at least 1 metre** from each other. If it is not possible for adults to keep a distance of at least 1 metre from each other, then protective masks should be used. Masks must be worn correctly. For more details, see the [guidance provided by the Directorate of Health](#). Efforts should be made to keep contact between teachers and other staff to a minimum and prevent, as much as possible, their circulation between school buildings and premises.

Social distancing and restrictions on group numbers do not apply to children born after 2005. School staff therefore does not need to practise social distancing with children of pre-primary and primary-school age.

All adults must adhere to rules on groups (the number of people allowed to be together in an enclosed space is determined by social distancing) and a minimum distance of 1 metre from other adults. This applies to parents, guardians and to anybody else entering school premises, e.g. maintenance workers or delivery

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persons.

Consideration and caution must be exercised towards students, teachers and staff at higher risk COVID-19 infection.

Everybody should pay attention to personal hygiene and wash their hands regularly with handwash and disinfectant. All surfaces must be disinfected and [cleaning](#) instructions must be followed. It is important to observe the preventive guidance in force at any given time.

## **2. May students use common areas of the school freely?**

Yes. Social distancing and restrictions on group numbers do not apply to children born after 2005.

## **3. May cafeterias in primary schools operate as normal, regardless of how many students are eating at the same time?**

Yes, but preventive measures should be taken. Social distancing and restrictions on group numbers do not apply to children but do apply to teachers and other staff.

## **4. May students serve themselves in the dining hall?**

It is better for students to be served their food in order to reduce the number of shared surfaces. If this is not possible to organise, they may serve themselves.

## **5. What happens if an infection occurs in a primary school?**

Response plans are in place at schools. Instructions in the event of a COVID-19 infection can be found [here](#).

## **6. What rules apply to the health of students/staff, regarding flu symptoms?**

Primary-school children and staff should not come to school if they:

- a. are in quarantine, in isolation or are waiting for test results;
- b. have been in isolation due to COVID-19 infection and it has not been 14 days since they were discharged;
- c. have any symptoms of coronavirus (colds, coughs, fever, headaches, bone aches, fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, etc.).

If their illness is caused by something other than COVID-19, school children and staff should have gone at least one day without a temperature before returning to school.

It is important for parents of school children and school staff to continue to pay close attention to infection prevention measures and the risk of infection.

## **7. In which circumstances is it necessary for primary-school children to be tested for COVID-19?**

- a. If there is reason to believe that a child has come into contact with COVID-19, e.g. because they have spent time with person with a confirmed or suspected infection, they must take a test.
- b. If a child and others in their family or close circle have symptoms (i.e. colds, coughs, fever, headaches, bone aches, fatigue, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, etc.), they must also take a test. If nobody else in the child's family or network has symptoms like this, then it is up to a healthcare professional to decide whether the child needs to take a test.

**8. In what circumstances is it necessary for primary-school children to quarantine?**

Children need to quarantine, as instructed by a healthcare professional or the infection tracing team, if they have been in contact with anybody, of any age, who has a confirmed or suspected infection of COVID-19. Children who are not formally in quarantine themselves but who are not old enough to know how to keep distance from members of their household who are in quarantine owing to exposure to infection may need to quarantine with other members of their household.

**9. What should parents do when in doubt as to whether or not their child may attend their primary school?**

If parents are in doubt as to whether or not their child should attend their primary school, i.e. if they have symptoms or are in any way unwell, if they have come in contact with an infected person or if they have been abroad, the child should remain at home until the parents have consulted a healthcare centre (by phone or via [heilsuvera.is](https://heilsuvera.is)) or the infection tracing team, as appropriate, and a decision has been taken to the contrary.

**10. Is access to primary-school buildings restricted, e.g. for parents / guests / external visitors?**

Social distancing and restrictions on group numbers apply to all adults. External visitors born after 2005 must keep a distance of at least 1 meter from each other and adhere to current restrictions on gatherings. Decisions on further implementation are the responsibility of the municipal authorities and the pre-primary school head. It is important to observe the applicable restrictions at any given time.

**11. Do parents and visitors need to disinfect their hands when entering primary schools?**

Everybody should continue to exercise extreme caution and conform to strict hygiene when entering school buildings, out of consideration for students and school staff. Further implementation is at the discretion of the school head.

**12. Will there continue to be additional cleaning and disinfecting this school year?**

Infection prevention measures require close attention to continue to be paid to hygiene. The Civil Protection Department of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police has issued a set of [cleaning instructions](#).

**13. May team meetings, staff meetings and department meetings be held? May staff from different departments take their breaks and coffee breaks together?**

Yes, but social distancing of at least one metre must be observed and rules on maximum group numbers in enclosed spaces must be followed.

In larger schools, efforts should be made to keep contact between teachers and other staff to a minimum and prevent, as possible, their circulation between school buildings and premises. This is even more important if there are infection hotspots near the school in question.

**14. May music teachers, psychologists and teaching consultants travel between schools and teach students in primary schools?**

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Yes, but it is important for them to observe infection prevention measures and social distancing and use common areas in the various schools they visits, such as cafeterias and toilets, as little as possible. Staff who care for at-risk individuals should take special care and try to limit contacts as much as possible. If it is not possible to keep a distance of at least one metre between adults, then protective masks must be used.

Further implementation is at the discretion of the education authorities and school directors.

**15. Is it possible to organise events within primary schools and to take children on external trips?**

Yes, provided that it is possible to maintain at least one metre distance and rules on maximum group numbers in enclosed spaces can be followed. Arrangements must be made for good hygiene, i.e. access to facilities for hand washing and disinfecting.

Schools should also be cleaned especially after such events - see the Department of Civil Protection's [cleaning instructions](#).

**16. Should parent/teacher appointments, parents' meetings, handover meetings, staff interviews and planning days be conducted in the normal way?**

Yes, such meetings and events may take place in the normal way, provided that it is possible for staff to keep a distance of at least one metre from each other and external visitors to keep a distance of at least two metres and that there are never

more than 100 people in the same enclosed space at any given time.

**17. Are school libraries operating as usual?**

Yes, but it is important to observe infection prevention measures, social distancing and restrictions on group numbers. You can consult the [information for library staff](#), which should be used in both classrooms and school libraries.

**18. Are there any restrictions on vocational training or study and/or on visits by 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students associated with certain electives?**

No, but both students and their hosts must observe infection prevention measures and adults must follow social distancing rules and restrictions on group numbers.

**19. What about well-attended school social activities involving close contact, such as end-of-school-year celebrations, annual parties, spring festivals, field trips, sports tournaments, school trips, exhibitions, etc.?**

At events bringing together students and staff, staff must keep a distance of at least one metre from each other, and rules on the maximum number of adults in the same enclosed space must be followed.

At events bringing together parents and/or relatives, social distancing of two metres must be observed and the relevant rules on the maximum number of people in the same enclosed space must be followed.

It is also important to ensure access to facilities for hand washing and disinfection and to observe the highest standards of hygiene. School buildings should also be

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cleaned especially after such events - see the relevant [cleaning instructions](#).