

Letter of information in case of an infection with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in a facility

Dear Sir or Madam,

If an infection with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has been detected in an educational institution, such as a school or a day care center, there is often great uncertainty on all sides. In view of the scarce resources of the public health department and the large number of tasks to be performed in order to cope with the corona pandemic, it is therefore important to us to provide a transparent description of the work processes and further steps to be taken in the event of an infection. This letter is intended to contribute to this.

In the event of a positive SARS CoV-2 case or a suspected case, the procedure in daycare facilities and schools is uniformly regulated throughout Germany. The procedure follows the recommendations of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and is independent of whether a child or an employee is affected. Every suspected case is isolated at home and must remain isolated until clarification. For those who test positive, domestic isolation for at least ten days is the rule. After this period, they can be readmitted to school and daycare if they are free of symptoms for 48 hours. In principle, each case is followed up and processed separately.

It is very understandable that the information that one has been tested positive for the corona virus oneself, one's own or the environment of one's own child, sometimes leads to insecurity and fears as well as an increased need for information. It is well known that children and young adults are less frequently affected by a SARS-CoV-2 infection than adults. Children and teenagers often show no or only mild symptoms; in the case of illness, children and adolescents usually fall ill easily.

According to current knowledge, transmission in Dresden mostly takes place outside of educational institutions in private environments, i.e. it is registered in institutions and rarely passed on within the institution (so-called secondary infection). In other words, the hygiene concepts developed by the individual institution itself are effective.

To ensure that this remains the case in the future, and that cases of infection in Dresden's schools and daycare centers can be well controlled, the unhindered spread of infection must be consistently accompanied by infection protection and hygiene measures on site. It is also important, however, that rapid case detection, traceability of infection chains and consistent implementation of isolation is guaranteed through trusting cooperation between institutions, those affected and the health authorities. At this point, it should be made clear that no one is voluntarily infected with the virus. Questions of guilt are therefore unnecessary.

If the SARS-CoV-2 virus is introduced into a facility, it is therefore important to identify as quickly as possible persons who are considered to be contact persons with a high risk of infection. These persons of the so-called category 1 include

- Persons who have had continuous close contact with a person infected with the coronavirus SARSCoV-2 for at least 15 minutes, especially in conversational situations,
- persons who, due to their close proximity to a person infected with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, were likely to be exposed to relevant concentrations of aerosols even at a greater distance (e.g. singing together or exercising indoors),

- persons who have been in relatively confined space or contact situations difficult to monitor (e.g. school class, course, group event) with a person infected with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 for a period of more than 30 minutes

It should be noted that the index case - i.e. the person tested positive - is contagious two days before the first symptoms appear and then for about 12 days. This means that contacts with other people two days before the onset of symptoms are also relevant.

Depending on the practical implementation of the hygiene concept of the individual facility and the practical everyday life (e.g. open concept in a daycare center vs. clear group separation or course instruction from secondary level 2 vs. class-based instruction of grades 1 to 10), a varying number of persons may be requested by the health authority to go into quarantine at home. In this case, the behavioral guidelines for quarantined persons published on www.dresden.de/corona are decisive and must be observed. Depending on the situation, a complete age group, a complete group or school class, or just individual persons of one or more classes or groups can be affected by isolation measures.

Please remain calm and keep in mind that between a first, very general written information by the public health department, only the given contact risk will be informed. As far as possible, the facility management will also inform you, in consultation with the health authority, which groups or classes are affected by any measures and must, for example, move into seclusion at home. In this case, the period of time during which the isolation (quarantine) must be maintained is also specified. However, it can take several days before the sometimes very time-consuming research work is completed (so-called contact person tracking or containment).

In the event that you or your child is considered a Category 1 contact person (see above), you will receive a notice of separation a few days later. This will show the date of the separation and also serve as proof for the employer. Unfortunately, no certificates can be issued in advance, so we ask you to be patient until you receive the written notification.

If you or your child belong to the inner circle of contacts of a person infected with coronavirus SARSCoV-2, a PCR test can be performed. Whether such a test is performed depends on various factors. In case of symptoms it will be carried out in any case, in case of absence of symptoms the public health department decides. The public health department can also commission a third party or refer you to a test center.

It is important that family members, friends or acquaintances of contact persons with an increased risk of infection do not count as contact persons until the contact person himself is not considered to be infected. To illustrate this with an example: A child had close contact in an institution with a person infected with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The child itself is considered to be a Category 1 contact and must therefore be placed in domestic isolation. A quarantine certificate is issued. The child's parents are not considered to be the contact person in this case and therefore do not receive a quarantine notification. They do not have to isolate themselves at home. Something else applies only if the child itself tests positive. Then the parents are again considered to be the Category 1 contact person in relation to their own child. Then the procedure as described above is also implemented for the parents. So the formula applies: The contact person to the contact person is not relevant for the infection process.

The decision who is to be considered the contact person and who is not is made by the public health department with the help of the recommendations for action and scientific findings of the RKI. The weighing up is carried out uniformly throughout Germany and is not only applied in this way within Dresden.

Persons who are not being tested for a reason, but who have a cold, cough or light fever ($< 38^{\circ}\text{C}$) due to the beginning of the cold season, should still behave in a way that prevents transmission. This includes, as far as feasible and especially from a 7-day incidence of 35 infected persons per 100,000 inhabitants, isolation at home for five days and at least 48 hours symptom freedom as well as an explicit contact reduction.

With resuming questions approximately around the topic Coronavirus SARSCoV-2 we ask you to use in a first step our daily updated information offer on www.dresden.de/corona or the hotline of the public health department under 03514 88 53 22. Here we try to collect and answer questions about SARS-CoV-2 that have already been raised in the past. Please note, however, that there may be longer waiting times on the phone. Should you or your child develop symptoms that indicate the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the on-call service of the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians is available to you at 116 117.