



To the parents and legal guardians of primary school students in Rhineland-Palatinate

To the parents and legal guardians of special needs students in Rhineland-Palatinate

Dear parents,
Dear legal guardians,

On Monday, the 1st of February 2021, the hybrid lessons for children from forms 1-4 were supposed to start. You and your children have been looking forward to this day. The schools prepared this day with great commitment.

Unfortunately, however, due to the recent changes in infection numbers and the current situation we cannot risk opening the schools on February 1st: In the neighbouring federal state of Baden-Württemberg, 13 new cases of new virus mutations came up. For that reason, we immediately consulted experts from the University Medical Centre in Mainz about the changes in the current situation.

Up to now the experts had deemed the transition to hybrid lessons safe, due to the constant decreasing incidence of under 100 state-wide, as much as we did ourselves. Nevertheless, regarding the new situation, they gave the advice to put aside the school openings for now. The case numbers in Rhineland-Palatinate are going down, but as the new, various mutations' risks are not well known yet, the experts have advised us to be cautious with further openings. As soon as we have reliable information, we will situation following this advice.

I had always stressed that the transition to hybrid-lessons on February 1st 2021 would have to remain under the reservation that the current infection status permits for it. We cannot certainty say that that is the case. A slower approach to openings is what the situation calls for now, to maintain our current success in case numbers. For that reason, online classes will continue until further notice. The option for emergency childcare will continue under the current hygiene regulations. Because of the good and successful hygiene concepts, social distancing and obligatory masks our experts had no safety concerns.

Primary schools (Grundschulen) For secondary school students we will specify the mask regulations, similarly to the rules in public transit and make medical masks obligatory for the students in emergency childcare.

Schools for special needs (Förderschulen): For the students in years 5 and older we will specify the mask regulations, similarly to the rules in public transit and make medical masks obligatory for the students in emergency childcare.

I regret having to inform you about this decision. I am sure you can imagine that I was not easy to decide this. It is a challenge for you the parents and for the children, just as it is for the teachers and us. However, this decision is the right one and is according to our way to act in this pandemic from the beginning: so many lessons in presence as we can offer under pandemic conditions

We will inform you about the next steps in the upcoming days.

Kind regards,

Dr Stephanie Hubig