

Der Minister

Thüringer Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport
Postfach 90 04 63 · 99107 Erfurt

Telefon-Hotline
+49 361 57 - 3411 500

Erfurt,
15. März 2020

Emergency care in schools and day care facilities for children during the time of closures because of the coronavirus / COVID-19

Dear Sir or Madam, dear Parents,

The Thuringian government is currently taking a great number of different measures in an attempt to slow down the spread of the coronavirus. **The closure of all schools and day care facilities for children from Tuesday, 17th March 2020 until the end of the Easter vacations is part of these measures.**

All of you are now facing the huge challenge of organizing day care for your children at short notice.

As you can see from the directive by the Thuringian Ministry of Health to close all schools and childcare facilities, there will be an emergency day care programme for small groups of children. Emergency day care is being offered exclusively to children, whose parents work in the so-called critical infrastructure sector. In this letter, we would like to explain to you which children are entitled to these emergency day care programmes.

Our guidelines are based on our firm belief that avoiding unnecessary contact with other people is currently vital. Only by doing so can we significantly slow down the spread of the coronavirus. Therefore, emergency day care for children is only available to a limited number of exceptional cases. We can only provide relief for those companies and authorities that rely on their complete staff to be able to deal with the current situation. We assume that all other companies and authorities will be able to function even if their staff are depleted. Even if this course of action burdens many of you, we would like to point out that this is in our common interest to slow down the spread of the coronavirus.

Therefore, the following regulations are to take effect immediately:

 **TAGE
SCHLAUER**

bildungsfreistellung.de

**Thüringer Ministerium
für Bildung, Jugend
und Sport**
Werner-Seelenbinder-Str. 7
99096 Erfurt

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A. Children who can attend emergency day care programmes

1. **Only** those children are accepted, where both parents (or a single parent with legal custody) are employed in **one of the following areas**:
 - **Public health care** (doctors' practices, hospitals, test laboratories, ambulances, pharmacies, health authorities etc.);
 - **Day care** (retirement homes, nursing homes, outpatient care services, care services for people with disabilities etc.);
 - **Production of medical or medical care products**;
 - **Authorities** responsible for public order and safety (police, firefighters etc.);
 - **Disaster management** ("Technisches Hilfswerk" etc.);
 - In individual cases, schools and day care facilities for children can also accept children whose parents do not work in one of the areas mentioned above but in areas of comparable importance to medical care or public order and safety. In individual cases, exceptions can also be made for areas that are of central importance to the provision of the population with necessary goods or services. The management of a school or a day care facility will make the decision on these individual cases.
2. Emergency day care programmes will be available to children normally attending a crèche, kindergarten and school **up to grade 6**. Emergency day care will not be available to older children. Exceptions from this age limit will be possible in individual cases, if older children need day care because of a disability.
3. Emergency day care will only be available for children, where **both parents or the single parent with legal custody** work/s in the so-called critical infrastructure sector. If only one parent meets this requirement, the child cannot participate in an emergency day care programme.
4. Children will only be looked after, if the parents give credible assurances that **any other kind of care is not available**.
5. The existing **regulations banning certain people from entering school premises** remain in effect. As long as no more rigorous directives apply, the following children must not enter a school building or a day care facility for children (applicable also to emergency day care programmes):
 - people infected with the coronavirus,
 - people with direct contact to a person sick with COVID-19 or a person infected with COVID-19 in the first 14 days after the contact,
 - people returning from areas classified as high risk areas by the Robert Koch Institute in the first 14 days after returning,

- people with general cold-like symptoms, for as long as the symptoms continue.

The management of the school or day care facility makes the decision about the admission of a child into the emergency care programme based on these guidelines. Please accept any decision made by the management.

Annotation of item 5: Bans from entering school premises apply to children, their parents/carers, teachers, other pedagogical and technical staff alike.

- a. People who have tested positive for the coronavirus must not enter a childcare facility or a school. They must be isolated immediately and where necessary, be treated in a hospital. The local health authorities are responsible for these people.
- b. Irrespective of any prior travel, people who have had direct contact (at least 15 minutes of face-to-face contact in close proximity) to a person whose infection with the coronavirus has been established by an approved laboratory, must not enter a school building or a childcare facility within 14 days after the contact. These people are required to report to the local health authorities immediately, irrespective of their symptoms.
- c. People returning from high-risk areas must not enter a childcare facility or a school building for 14 days after their return.

High-risk areas are determined by the Robert Koch Institute and are subject to change on a daily basis. It is your own responsibility to regularly check the list of high-risk areas for new entries.

The ban on entering school buildings and childcare facilities applies also to people who have returned from a newly determined high-risk area within the last 14 days. It also applies if the people in question have already entered the school building or the childcare facility after returning from the high-risk area.

An overview of the identified high-risk areas can be found on the website of the Robert Koch Institute www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete.html.

If acute respiratory symptoms appear within 14 days of returning from a high-risk area, patients should see a doctor after scheduling an appointment by telephone and telling them about the trip to a high-risk area. Any further course of action will be coordinated by the local health authorities where necessary.

- d. People with cold-like symptoms such as a cough or runny nose must not enter a school building or childcare facility as long as they keep experiencing these symptoms. A doctor's note certifying good health is not necessary.

B. Implementation of the emergency care programme

The emergency care is **not centralised**. It will be put into practice by the regular employees of a school or childcare facility.

Children will be cared for in groups, which must not have more than 15 children. The familiar forms and groups (teachers and pedagogical staff included) will be maintained where possible.

The emergency care programme covers the normal day care hours.

C. Further information

We would like to point out that the Thuringian Ministry of Health urges companies, offices and private citizens not to establish new day care options for the children of employees. This would run contrary to the belief that avoiding unnecessary contact with other people is vital. It would thwart all the efforts being made with school closures. In these new day care programmes, children and carers would interact who have not been in contact before. **Please abstain from having your children taken care of in newly established day care groups.**

Furthermore, we would like to point out that an infection with the new coronavirus is particularly dangerous for the elderly. Therefore, any contact with this group of the population should be avoided. As a rule, it is not recommended to have grandparents care for children.

Currently the Thuringian as well as the federal government are in the process of determining generous solutions to any financial issues. This includes the costs of cancelled school events and the fees for the next three weeks. The federal government is also working on a solution to wage entitlement for absence from work due to childcare. In this respect, we are kindly asking you for your patience. Please understand that we are focussing on steps towards a containment of coronavirus infections.

The homepage of the Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports provides you with further information <https://bildung.thueringen.de/ministerium/coronavirus>. There is also a hotline available: (0361 57 - 34 11 500)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helmut Holter', written in a cursive style.

Helmut Holter