

Updated: What you need to know about Norway's kindergarten reopening ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Norway's education minister, Guri Melby, on Wednesday issued guidelines from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training ahead of the opening of kindergartens from April 20. We've updated this with the latest info.

The guidelines include details on how kindergartens can minimise the risk of infection. We've gone through them and updated our Q&A below.

What measures are being put in place to reduce the risk of infections?

Kindergartens are advised to "avoid larger collections of children", with a maximum of three children per adult for children under three years old and six children per adult for those under six.

Children are to be split into small discreet groups, within which they can play normally. But they should not interact with other groups. The composition of the groups can be changed, but not more often than weekly.

Kindergarten staff can still comfort and cuddle children in their group, but should wash their hands afterwards.

The number of toys will be reduced to make cleaning easier. Toys should not be shared between the small groups without being cleaned.

Toys should not be brought from home.

Children should be outdoors as much as possible.

Children should not share food or drink. It should be served to them in portions in cups and on plates.

Kindergarten employees must keep a distance of at least a metre from other adults.

Cleaning at kindergartens should be "enhanced".

All adults working in kindergartens should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, before drying them with disposable paper towels.

The directorate advises kindergartens to put up posters explaining the hand-cleaning regime, and to develop "routines that children find fun to carry out".

Employees and children should wash their hands:

- On leaving and returning home
- On arrival at the kindergarten
- After coughing, sneezing, wiping or picking nose
- After going to the toilet or changing nappies
- Before and after meals
- After sleeping
- After coming in from outside activity
- When hands are visibly dirty

Where washbasins are not available, bottles of alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be in place.

When should I keep my child home?

If your child show even mild symptoms of respiratory illness, they should stay home until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours. The guidelines stress, though, that children and kindergarten workers with "typical symptoms of hayfever/pollen allergy", such as itchy eyes, sneezing and a runny nose, they can go to kindergarten.

If either your child or someone else who lives with you belongs to a risk group, they should be kept home. This might include people with chronic lung disease - such as asthma - diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease or high blood pressure. It may be that the government will narrow this down so as not to capture too large a share of children.

If a child lives or is in close contact with someone who has a confirmed coronavirus infection, they should be in quarantine and should not attend school or kindergarten.

What do I need to know about dropping off and picking up my child?

If you have flu-like or respiratory symptoms, you should isolate yourself and should not drop off or pick up your child.

If possible, parents should avoid entering the kindergarten, with children instead meeting staff at the entrance when the day starts, and guardians meeting at the same location when picking up (although if children need extra comforting, parents can if absolutely necessary enter).

Children should arrive dressed in warm, outdoor clothing.

Do not bring toys or other things from home.

Is it compulsory to return my child to kindergarten?

Kindergarten is not compulsory in Norway, so if you are worried about your child getting or spreading the coronavirus infection, you can choose to keep them home. Just inform the kindergarten's management about your plans.

It is, though, compulsory to send children to school between the between the ages of 6 and 15, so when your child's school opens after April 27, if they are well, they must attend.

If you were unwilling to do this, you could always claim that your child is sick. You could also look into home-schooling, which is legal in Norway, although you are unlikely to get a home-schooling request approved at short notice, and you risk losing your child's place at their current school.

What restrictions are being lifted?

- Kindertartens will open from April 20
- Primary school classes for pupils in years 1–4, and out-of-school care programmes will re-open from April 27.
- Upper secondary schools for second-and third-year pupils who following vocational education will be opened from April 27, under new infection control guidelines.
- The ban on staying in country cabins will be lifted on April 20.
- Hairdressers, skin care professionals and other businesses where there is one-to-one contact will be allowed to resume operations, under new guidelines from April 27.
- Psychologists, physiotherapists, and other health practitioners who have close contact with patients will after April 20 be allowed to start giving treatment.
- Parents or guardians who need to cross the border between Norway and another country in order to maintain contact arrangements with children will be excused quarantine (no exact date has been given, but it will come "quickly").
- Sports can be resumed if it is possible to follow the recommendations of the Norwegian Directorate of Health on social distancing and group size.

What restrictions will remain in place?

- Primary and lower secondary schools will remain closed for years 5–10, and these pupils will continue to receive remote schooling.
- Upper secondary schools with no vocational element will remain closed
- Fitness centres, swimming pools, and water parks will stay closed
- No visitors are allowed at old people's homes and other institutions for vulnerable groups
- Most bars and restaurants will remain closed.
- Libraries, passport offices, and the public access areas in police stations will remain closed
- Stricter border controls will remain, with foreign nationals lacking a residence permit refused entry

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Source URL (modified on 28 May 2020): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/20/05/updated-what-you-need-know-about-norways-kindergarten-reopening>

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