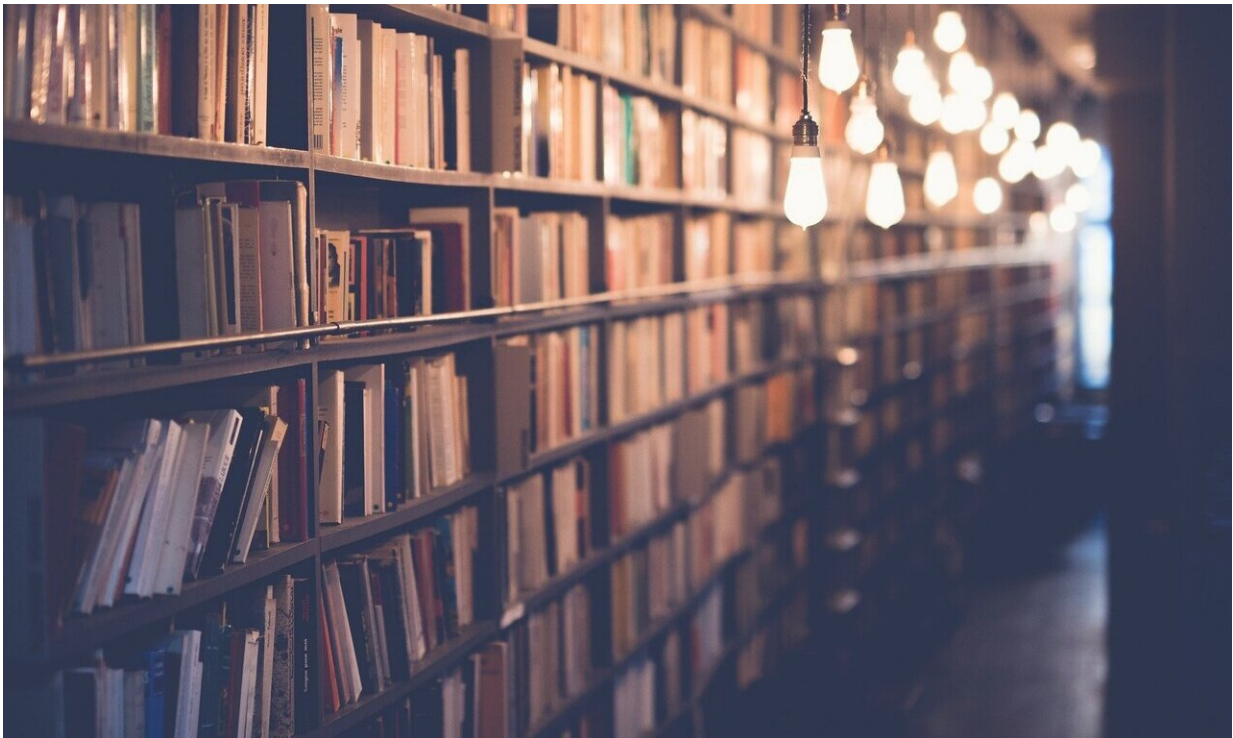


# Coronavirus pandemic in Germany: How education can succeed in times of crises

October 1 2020

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The coronavirus pandemic and all measures taken to curb the spreading of the infection have led to a situation where many childcare facilities and schools were temporarily unable to fulfill their educational mandate. Others were only able to comply with this mandate to a very limited extent. A reliable technological and organizational infrastructure, which

could compensate for a complete shutdown of educational institutions, is not yet available in Germany. Children and young people, their families and educational professionals are therefore particularly affected by the current crisis. In the ad-hoc statement "The Coronavirus Pandemic: Towards a Crisis-Resistant Education System," the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina indicates suitable measures, outlining how the existing education system can become more resilient and react more flexibly under crisis conditions. The document is a translation of the original statement published in German that was addressed to the responsible stakeholders in the national education system, i.e. state ministries, state institutes, education providers as well as day-care centers and schools.

According to the statement, the primary goal is to facilitate continuous attendance at educational institutions. However, as long as there is neither a vaccine nor a widely available therapy, the risk of infection in educational institutions must be minimized. Depending on the local infection situation, partial closures are to be expected in the coming months. For this reason, the experts also recommend investments in a sustainable digital system of remote learning as a complementary measure to classroom teaching.

The authors of the ad-hoc statement, representing educational studies, [educational research](#), didactics, psychology, economics, sociology, theology, virology, and medicine specify measures in seven fields of action:

1. Maintaining access to educational institutions: In addition to generally recommended infection control measures and systematic coronavirus testing, the specific needs of high-risk groups among children, pedagogical staff and relatives of both groups should be taken into account. In order to avoid the total closure of educational institutions, small, closed contact groups (e.g. school classes) should be established

wherever this is possible. These groups should have as little contact between each other as possible. The aim is to ensure that the children and [young people](#) in an epidemiological group have personal contact with each other and with the educational staff for as long as possible.

2. Developing concepts for integrating classroom and remote learning: Making learning and education possible is the central competence of educational professionals, even in times of remote learning. Parents can only support here. The Federal Government and the states should work out a preferably cross-state solution for digital learning platforms that have been verified as compliant with data protection laws. In addition, the statement recommends cross-state framework regulations and standards, for example for examinations in phases of remote learning. The platforms should enable teachers to share quality-assured materials and content, and to interact with children, young people and their parents in phases of remote learning.

3. Providing a suitable, secure, and data protection-compliant digital infrastructure: The first financial requirements were created by the "Digital Pact for Schools" initiative ("DigitalPakt Schule"). The [technical equipment](#), support, maintenance, repair, and development of educational media should be supported by a cross-state support committee or board comprising experts from educational administration, educational practice and research, as well as information and knowledge management.

4. Supporting educators in the professional use of digital media: Support is needed concerning digital infrastructure and technical equipment, the provision of digital teaching aids and materials, as well as continuing education programs.

5. Expanding cooperation and communication with parents and families: Among other things, the experts recommend offering periodic (video)

consultation hours, coaching materials and services for parents, as well as digital learning materials with age-appropriate stimulation and support.

6. Additional support for children and young people with learning difficulties and lower achievement levels: The focus on maths and language skills, as well as basic competencies that lay the groundwork for further learning is recommended as a priority.

7. Strengthening fundamental knowledge and improving information: Research and evaluation help to scientifically evaluate both the effects of day-care center and school closures as well as the effectiveness of newly introduced teaching and learning methods. They also help to adapt the methods to current needs.

The authors of the statement point out that additional resources are needed to implement the recommended measures. The extensive efforts to cope with the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic have so far included comparatively modest investments in education and the future opportunities of the young generation.

With this statement, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina publishes the fifth ad-hoc statement on the coronavirus pandemic in Germany. It is based on the state of research of the participating scientific disciplines. Making decisions in the field of education whilst taking into account the perspectives of the stakeholders is the task of democratically legitimized politics and the responsible institutions.

**More information:** The publication is available at:  
[www.leopoldina.org/en/coronavirus](http://www.leopoldina.org/en/coronavirus)

Provided by Leopoldina

Citation: Coronavirus pandemic in Germany: How education can succeed in times of crises (2020, October 1) retrieved 7 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-10-coronavirus-pandemic-germany-crises.html>

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