

# NEWSLETTER

Belgian Paediatric COVID-19 Task Force

31/8/2020

**Disclaimer:**

*The Belgian Pediatric COVID-19 Task Force critically reviews the most recent scientific literature.*

*Advices and guidelines reflect the state of the art at a particular time.*

*They can be updated based on new developments. Implementation is at your own responsibility.*

- **The experience with the summer camps was very reassuring!**

The guidelines that were developed in collaboration with the Paediatric Task Force were followed very well. A very low number of camps had to be stopped. 99, 8% of all camps ended without problems!

- **All children will be able to go to school!**

All schools open in code yellow, which means that all children can start school on Sept 1<sup>st</sup>.

In primary schools and in the first 2 years of secondary school, all children will still be able to attend 100%, even if code orange/red applies at a certain moment (except children mentioned in the 'at risk' list: see below). In secondary schools, children from the third year and up, will go halftime in code orange/red.

In secondary schools masks will be needed during class time (as recommended by WHO as well because teenagers are probably as contagious as adults). Optimal ventilation is recommended for all classrooms, but will not be easy everywhere (esp. in big urban environments), which is why masks will be especially important in secondary schools. If there are local outbreaks, the situation will be adapted by local outbreak response teams, in which CLB/PSE will be involved.



- **The (very limited) ‘at risk’ list of children for which going to school is not recommended, has been updated by our Task Force. This document is intended as a guidance. The treating physician can make a ‘judgement call’ – in agreement with the parents – based on the situation.** The list can be found here in [NL](#) and [FR](#). The Task Force also recommends that all children on the list should be vaccinated for Influenza.
- **Children < 6 years don’t have to be tested, unless in specific circumstances.** As before for children <3 years old, the Task Force and Sciensano agreed that testing in children <6 years presenting with clinical signs is now only recommended:
  - if the child needs to be hospitalized
  - if there is a family member at risk of a severe manifestation of COVID-19
  - when there is a cluster in a collectivity

For children  $\geq 6$  years, the testing strategy remains the same, for diagnosis and for contacts. More info – including a **nice algorithm for children <6y** – can be found here in [NL](#) and in [FR](#).

- **When do daycare centres/kindergartens have to close?**  
The Task Force agreed with Sciensano that **daycare centres and kindergartens DO NOT HAVE TO BE CLOSED** unless the caregiver/teacher is positive or 2 children in the same bubble are positive.
- **When do contacts in primary school and secondary school have to be tested?**  
Because of the lower transmission rates in primary schools (and because the teacher can keep more distance than in daycares/kindergartens) **ALL contacts (children/teacher) of a positive child/teacher in primary schools are considered as ‘low risk’** and do not have to be tested. The positive child/teacher however stays home of course. For children in secondary schools however, the same rules as for adults apply. More info here in [NL](#) and in [FR](#). The decision to close a class can only be taken by a local outbreak team, in which CLB/PSE and infection prevention authorities participate.
- **How to manage symptoms in kindergarten or school (by CLB and PSE)?**  
Please find the algorithm [here](#) for kindergarten and here for [primary or secondary school](#) in Flanders. More information for the schools in Wallonia can be found [here](#). CLB/PSE will be responsible for contact tracing in schools. Please read [here](#) what will be the role of CLB from



