

International
School

Zurich
North

BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide to a smooth and safe transition

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



The events of recent months have proven what I have suspected ever since joining the ISZN community; that its greatest strength is the dedication and commitment of its pupils, parents, and staff members. Each have risen to the challenges posed by the arrival of Covid-19, and in doing so allowed us to smoothly navigate whatever difficulties the pandemic has thrown our way.

I would firstly like to pay tribute to the outstanding efforts of our dedicated educators whose commitment enabled such a smooth transition to online teaching and learning. I wish also to thank you – our parent community – for adapting to this new reality, for sharing your views so we could improve, and for being our partners in coming out of this situation stronger.

While a return to normality remains some way off, the decision to reopen the school buildings is an important step in this direction. However, it is not a decision that has been taken lightly. Federal and Cantonal guidance have heavily influenced our approach and all regulations have been adhered to stringently. We have also drawn heavily upon expertise from Cognita colleagues around the globe.

Both myself and Thomas Sardi have been in daily contact with the Cognita European Operations team,

ensuring that everything from social distancing measures to the provision of hand sanitisers have been meticulously planned and documented. During my six years as a school leader with Cognita, I have never felt more benefit to being part of a truly global and expert team.

This document is the result of extensive inputs, discussion, and planning. Parental survey responses have been a core aspect of those inputs and I hope this document reflects our aim to tailor the reopening plan to best meet your needs and assuage your concerns.

In closing, I wish to stress that the safety of our pupils and staff has been at the heart of our decision making process throughout and we are leaving nothing to chance in our reopening preparation. I hope you will be reassured by the comprehensive plans in place because it is the social interactions – what may be termed the 'hidden curriculum' – that ultimately make school life a truly memorable experience.

Jonathan Taylor, Principal

RE-OPENING

APPROACH & TIMELINE

In developing the plan for our return to school we have followed both Federal and Cantonal guidance, listened to your views through our Parent Survey and built on learnings from other Cognita schools across the world.

We believe that the key to a smooth, safe and ordered return to school is to stagger when we welcome the school community back through our doors. The schedule for return is set out clearly below, together with new timings for the school day.

Grade	Date of return	Timing of school day
Nursery, Pre-K, Kiga	Wednesday 20th May	TBC
1 - 3	Monday 18th May	8.45 - 14.45
4 - 5	Monday 11th May	8.30 - 14.30
6 - 9	Monday 11th May	8.20 - 15.00
10 - 11	Monday 18th May	8.20 - 15.00
12	Monday 8th June	TBC

A COMBINED TRANSITION TO TEACHING & LEARNING

As a school we are committed to balancing the needs of both the students in our physical classrooms and also those who remain in our virtual classrooms.

To do this we will:

- Continue the online educational provision for students who have not yet returned to school as per the staggered approach
- Provide online resources and support for those students who have actively decided not to return to school for the time being
- Continue to participate in Cognita online global events such as the 'Home Games' taking place later this month



NEW GUIDANCE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

We will all have to adapt our behaviour during the school day following government and expert guidance to ensure everyone's safety.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

Fortunately we have the benefit at ISZN of having larger classrooms than many other schools. We are taking full advantage of this and are reconfiguring the space to ensure we maintain the 2 metres guidance on social distancing. We have adapted the timetable to make sure that we are utilising the room space to best effect, and have limited class sizes to a maximum of 15 students in Primary and 12 in Secondary.

BREAK TIMES

We will stagger break times in order to limit the number of children in one place at one time.

CATERING

We request that all children bring in packed lunches. Lunch will be consumed in classrooms if appropriate social distancing can't be achieved in the Hall. Please consider the allergies of other children and avoid packing nuts into the lunches.

MOVING AROUND SCHOOL

In the Primary school we will have staggered lessons, break and lunch times. In the Secondary school we will be operating a one way system to manage the flow of people around the building.

We have added signage and floor markings to help everyone maintain social distancing.

We will limit capacity in our lift.

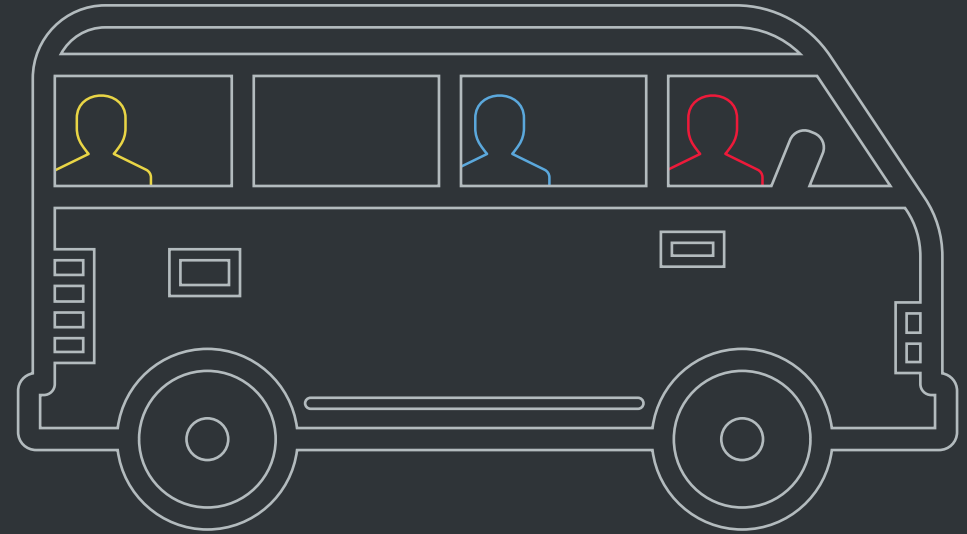
PERSONAL HYGIENE

We will continue to urge children to regularly wash hands, and have enough bathrooms to support this. Extra supplies of soap and paper towels have been purchased.



GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

We have carefully considered the wishes of the parent body and the advice of the Swiss government to introduce some additions to our school transport approach.



New minibus service:

- A minibus service has been secured, working with the company Taxi 7x7, so that families who wish to avoid public transport can do so
- The cost will be 15 CHF per child per day and this will be billed to parents at the end of the school year via invoice
- We will contact you separately this week so you can choose to sign up to this service. Once we have the final list of students participating we will plan the routes
- The routes will run initially for the first 2 weeks of term, with an option to extend if necessary

We have introduced the following measures in the interests of safety:

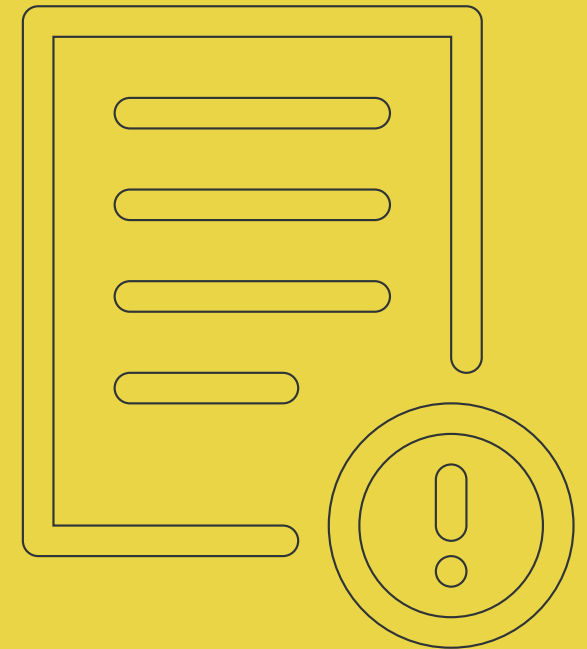
- The first pick up of the day will be one of our staff who will then be the chaperone for the route. On the return journey the staff member will be the last drop off
- The buses will be filled at half capacity to allow for social distancing
- Buses will be cleaned before and after use
- Buses will arrive to and depart from school on a staggered schedule to avoid crowding at drop off and pick up time

If you wish to continue to drop off and pick up your children that is of course welcomed with the following requests:

- If using public transport please follow government advice and carry hand sanitiser so your child's hands can be cleaned before entering school
- Please follow the timing of the drop off and pick up schedule
- Please do not congregate with other parents
- Please use the separate entry and exit routes

PARENT GUIDE AT A GLANCE

1. Talk to your child about the new measures in this brochure
2. Let us know if you want to sign up to the new minibus service
3. Check your child's temperature each morning before school
4. Please provide a packed lunch for your child until further notice
5. Take note of any changes to the timings of the school day for your child



FAQS

WILL EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS RE-START?

No, not yet. After school clubs, school trips and the like will re-start when the government guidance changes.

WHAT'S YOUR POLICY ON VISITORS?

For now we will not be welcoming external visitors to our school site. As parents you are always welcome to contact us and arrange a (socially distanced) face to face meeting.

HOW ARE YOU RECORDING ABSENCE OF PUPILS WHEN SCHOOL RE-OPENS?

Once the school re-opens for your child's grade we will record absences in the same way as before.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO SEND MY CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

We understand that some parents and students may be wary about physically returning to school and we will do our best to deliver a suitable level of online provision for these students.

WILL THE PARENT SURVEYS CONTINUE?

Yes. We have found this a valuable and effective way of checking in with you. It allows us to take more collaborative decisions in this imperfect situation. We appreciate you sharing your views and suggestions with us.

WHAT IS YOUR CLEANING REGIME?

We have a robust cleaning regime throughout the school day with a focus on bathrooms and high-touch areas. At the end of the day we also repeat this and pay particular attention to the common areas of the school. On a Friday evening we do a weekly enhanced clean of all rooms in the school.

In the instance of a confirmed COVID-19 case we do a deep clean which includes all surface areas and carpets.

In all cases we use coronavirus approved disinfectants/aerosols, and have ordered sufficient stocks from our cleaners.

WILL CHILDREN AND STAFF BE EXPECTED TO WEAR FACE MASKS ON SITE?

In line with Swiss public schools we do not require pupils to wear masks during the school day. While we do not prohibit the wearing of masks during lessons, please bear in mind that masks are uncomfortable to wear and result in more frequent touching of the face. Furthermore, masks are primarily worn to prevent the wearer from spreading the virus rather than catching it. Therefore, for Primary age children in particular, who are low risk transmitters and likely to be most distracted and discomforted by the wearing of such an item, we feel that wearing a mask in school is counterproductive. We have also provided the same advice to our Staff.



WELLBEING

The transition back to school will still be a challenge for all of us trying to adjust to a new way of 'being', coping with fear of the unknown and in some cases balancing a mix of online and face to face learning. The wellbeing of our students, parents and teaching staff is our highest priority and we are lucky to be part of Cognita who have been able to provide lots of resources to support our school communities since the start of the lockdown.

This includes live webinars with our education experts, podcasts, and a series of videos and resources on wellbeing in these strange times for both students and parents. Members of our parent community have even shared how they have coped with lockdown. This evolving set of content can all be found at www.cognita.com



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

It was great to hear some of your feedback about how the school responded during lockdown. **Here are a few of the comments that make us feel proud.**

"I appreciate the frequent communication we are receiving from ISZN and clear direction and professional communications as to how the school is managing current circumstances."

"Very good support from teachers."

"The online platform was set up in record time. The exercises picked up right from where things were left off at school and the content has been very relevant."

"Thank you all for such personal caring!!! I've said it many times, and say again it makes ISZN special!"

"The online learning was implemented with absolute success! It's clear and interesting, both my sons are fully running from the 1st minute of online lessons."

"All good. Amazed how much is already in place."