

Canton of Schaffhausen
Cantonal Medical Services
Mühlentalstrasse 105
CH-8200 Schaffhausen
www.sh.ch



Cantonal Medical Services

To the parents of pupils attending
primary schools

City of Schaffhausen, 7 June 2021

Repetitive testing in primary schools

Dear Parents and Guardians

After this year's spring break, repetitive testing using pooled saliva samples was successfully introduced in secondary schools I and II. As part of a pilot project, these repetitive tests have now also been used in Dörflingen in both its primary school as well as in the kindergarten over the course of the last two weeks. In doing so, the processes could be reviewed and adapted to the needs in primary schools. The pilot project has shown that the implementation of repetitive tests is also feasible for younger children and that the effort for schools is manageable.

Based on the positive experiences and the risk of possible outbreaks at schools (despite the decreasing number of cases), the government council has argued and advocated that primary schools should prepare themselves administratively and organisationally for the implementation of repetitive testing. As a result, thanks to the administrative and organisational preparation, the canton has the possibility to quickly implement repetitive testing in all primary schools in the event of a general deterioration of the situation. If several cases occur in one school, these tests can be carried out locally and for a limited period of time as an addition to the existing and proven outbreak management of the Cantonal Medical Services. The school authorities also have the option of applying to the Cantonal Medical Services to carry out preventive repetitive tests in their primary schools even before a positive case occurs.

Repetitive testing will be conducted as follows: students will be asked to give a saliva sample once a week in the classroom (no nasopharyngeal swab). The saliva samples will be combined into a mixed sample (so-called pool with a maximum of 10 samples) by the responsible person on site. If the result of the pool shows positive, individual tests must be carried out afterwards in order to find out which individual(s) is/are actually infected. For this purpose, the pupils from the positive pool will be asked to undergo an individual PCR test. For children under 12 years of age, this test is always carried out by means of a saliva sample. As a consequence of the saliva sample, children are not allowed to drink or eat for at least one hour before the test. Children aged 12 and above can decide whether they want to be tested by means of a saliva sample or a nasopharyngeal swab. The subsequent laboratory analysis is carried out in both cases using the PCR method.

Classes will continue to take place in the classroom even if the pool is positive. However, the class will be isolated from the other classes as much as possible. Pupils from grade 4 onwards will also be required put on a protective mask until the test results are available. Once the process is complete, which usually takes up to 48 hours, the pupils will be allowed to return to regular classes. Pupils who do not take part in either the repetitive tests or the subsequent individual PCR test, and who therefore have neither a negative nor a positive test result, will have to undergo quarantine. This quarantine can be lifted with immediate effect by means of a negative individual PCR test, however, the parents will be required to seek for such a rest for the pupils by themselves.

On the website www.sh.ch/corona under the heading "All about testing" you will find further information and documents on the repetitive testing procedure. Pupils will be informed in detail about the procedure in class. In addition, the school administration will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



We would highly appreciate your consent for your child's participation in possible repetitive testing and thus show solidarity towards the other pupils and teachers. In order to give your consent, kindly fill out the attached form and send it with your child to school by Friday, 11 June 2021.

Thank you very much for your support!

Kind regards

Elke Lenz-Agnes, MD
Deputy Cantonal Medical Officer