



**Press Release - 271/04/2020**

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## **State government implements further measures for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic**

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**Partially new regulations apply from 20 April / Minister President Laschet: Social distancing and protection will continue to govern our everyday life**

### **State government announcement:**

On Thursday 16 April the state cabinet agreed further measures for dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. Health Minister Karl-Josef Laumann signed the Coronavirus Protection Order amendment, which comes into force from 20 April.

Minister President Armin Laschet: "National and state governments jointly agreed on Wednesday on a pathway towards a responsible form of normality. The fact that we are able to take these first steps is thanks first and foremost to the general public: through their personal conduct, adherence to rules and painfully foregoing social contact everyone has contributed to slowing down the spread of the coronavirus. This great sticking together in our society really impresses me and I would like to thank everyone for this from the bottom of my heart. Now what we need to do is maintain the successes achieved in containing the pandemic and simultaneously take steps to allow public life to slowly evolve again. Social distancing and protection will continue to govern our everyday life.

The new Coronavirus Protection Order now implements the measures jointly agreed by the minister presidents with the federal chancellor on Wednesday.

Changes arise from this in particular for the retail trade. Accordingly, as of 20 April the following outlets, in addition to those already known, can open: all book stores, animal supplies stores, DIY stores and garden centres including all comparable specialist stores (e.g. florists, plumbers'

merchants, ironmongers, painting supplies stores, flooring and building merchants). Furniture stores, specialist baby shops and motor vehicle and cycle trade sales outlets can also open again.

In addition, as a general principle all retail premises are then allowed to be operated if the normal sales floor space as defined by the NRW Retail Trade Order does not exceed 800 square metres. All establishments are required in this process to take precautions in relation to hygiene, controlling entry, avoiding queues and ensuring that people keep a minimum of 1.5 metres apart.

Based on the agreements reached by the federal chancellor and the minister presidents, the Department of Education is now planning a careful, phased resumption of school operations. On 20 April, it will initially be the secondary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia that reopen, albeit at first only so that teachers and school administrators can prepare for the resumption of school operations. From Thursday 23 April, the first pupils, who are taking final exams this year, will then be able, on a voluntary basis, to return to school to prepare for their exams. If the trend in the infection rate permits, the plan is for the schools to then be opened step-by-step from 4 May – initially for year 4 primary school pupils, in order to prepare them as well as possible for the forthcoming move in the summer up to secondary school. This initial opening of the schools is possible only with adherence to strict rules on hygiene and protection from infection. In addition to rules relating to hygiene plans, the schools will shortly be sent specially developed recommendations for actions to take in relation to school hygiene under pandemic conditions. The health of the pupils, teachers and everybody working in schools is the state government's top priority.

The amended Coronavirus Protection Order applies for the period 20 April until initially 3 May 2020. At the end of April the minister presidents and the federal chancellor will have a further meeting to discuss the next steps.

***This press release is also available online on the state government website [www.land.nrw](http://www.land.nrw)***

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