



Schola europaea

Office of the Secretary-General

Brussels, 27 March 2020  
2020-03-LD-29 GM/ab

## FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS' COMMUNITY

Dear Madam,

Dear Sir,

### **Subject: Impact of COVID-19 on the European Schools' education**

It has been two weeks since it was decided to suspend the obligatory regular attendance of pupils (Article 30 of the General Rules of the European Schools – Ref. 2014-03-D-14) and to suspend lessons “in situ” in all European Schools starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The European Schools in Varese and Munich had been forced to apply the same measures as of 24 February and 9 March 2020 respectively.

We have done our utmost to support teachers, pupils and parents to deal with this challenging situation

We are also really grateful to all those who have done their utmost in order to guarantee that the education of our pupils could continue, under the present challenging conditions.

Most of the schools have launched surveys involving the teaching staff, parents and pupils. The outcome is reassuring overall. We also understand that there remains room for improvement and areas where we can learn from each other. The Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools is promoting this exchange among schools and has provided guidance in distance teaching and learning. This guidance may be updated in the light of the feedback we receive.

We also have to address questions linked to school calendar until the end of the school year 2019/20.

For the time being all European Schools have suspended the obligatory regular attendance of pupils and suspended lessons in situ until 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020. A further prolongation is very likely and a decision will be taken by the Directors, upon advice from the Secretary General

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and in close consultation with the EU Commission, by the end of the coming week at the latest.

Consequently, we need to prepare for two scenarios:

- a 'reopening' of the schools, later in the second semester or
- a potential prolongation of the current situation until the end of the 2019/20 school year.

We are working in close consultation with the schools on these two scenarios and on Action Plans to deal with risks linked to both scenarios. The main aspects are the tests and examinations in the second semester of the current school year, the promotion of students to the following year and the European Bacculaureate (EB).

For the time being, we continue to prepare for the EB session as foreseen in the *General Rules* and the *Arrangements for implementing the Regulations for the European Bacculaureate*, and within the agreed calendar. However, we are aware that we need to be prepared for a scenario where the schools will not open their doors as planned after the Easter holidays or indeed possibly not before the end of the school year.

In particular with respect to the EB we will provide the Board of Governors of the European Schools at its meeting starting from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020 with concrete proposals, if the scenario dictates that distance teaching and learning would have to be prolonged for a substantial time and potentially until the end of the school year.

These proposals to the Board of Governors will have to take into consideration the approach envisaged by the different Member States with respect to their national Bacculaureate or school-leaving examinations. Our schools are based on the national systems of different Member States and we should aim at being in line with these systems and also in guaranteeing equal treatment within our system. We will also keep in mind that our students should not face unfavourable treatment, in comparison to the majority of pupils in the Member States' educational systems.

Please be reassured that the envisaged decisions will take into consideration, in first place, the health, well-being and safety of our pupils, parents and staff.

Moreover, we will have to ensure that these decisions will support a fair and transparent EB session for all S7 students in all the 13 European Schools and also in the Accredited European Schools providing the EB.

These decisions have also to limit to the minimum any possible negative impact on the assessment of our pupils, in comparison to previous year groups.

Finally, we will have to keep in mind that our graduates will not face any disadvantage when applying to a University, in particular in EU Member States and the United Kingdom.

I appeal for your understanding and patience that we cannot be more precise on the measures to be taken for the moment as I cannot prejudice any decision of the Board of Governors. We will do our utmost to ensure that any decision of the Board of Governors will guarantee the principles highlighted above.

I will inform you about further developments and decisions in due time and wish you and your families all the best.

Yours faithfully,



Giancarlo MARCHEGGIANO  
Secretary-General of the European Schools

cc: Directors of the European Schools  
Directors of the Accredited European Schools  
Members of the Board of Inspectors

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