

Prague, 27 April 2021

Ref. No.: MZDR 14600/2021-5/MIN/KAN  
MZDRX01FR5TB

## **EXTRAORDINARY MEASURE**

The Ministry of Health, as the competent administrative authority, pursuant to Section 80(1)(g) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll., on public health protection and amendments to certain related acts, as amended (hereinafter “Act No. 258/2000 Coll.”) and Section 2(1) of Act No. 94/2021 Coll., on extraordinary measures during the COVID-19 disease epidemic and on the amendment of certain related acts (hereinafter “Act No. 94/2021 Coll.”), **orders** this extraordinary measure, proceeding pursuant to Section 69(1)(b) and (2) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll., and pursuant to Section 2(2)(f) of Act No. 94/2021 Coll., in order to protect the population against the further spread of the COVID-19 disease caused by the novel SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus:

### **I.**

Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 3 May 2021 until the cancellation of this extraordinary measure, the operation of schools and educational facilities is limited so that the following is **limited**:

1. the operation of universities pursuant to Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Universities, and on the amendment and supplementation of certain other acts (the Universities Act), as amended, including foreign universities and their branches operating in the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as “Universities”), in that the personal presence of students during teaching and examinations is prohibited during studies at the university and for participants in lifelong education courses if more than 10 persons attend the examination in the room at one time; the prohibition against the in-person presence of students pursuant to this section does not apply to:
  - a) participation in clinical and practical teaching and the practical training of students in their final years,
  - b) participation at clinical and practical training of students in all years of study programs in general medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and other medical study programs, and students performing pedagogical practical training and practice at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools or educational facilities for the performance of institutional and protective education and
  - c) participation in individual consultations or advisory services (only one student and one academic worker or other person),
2. the operation of universities, in that the provision of accommodation to university students who have another place of residence in the Czech Republic is prohibited at the accommodation facilities of universities, except for those students who may participate in education pursuant to point 1,
3. the operation of secondary and higher vocational schools and conservatories pursuant to Act No. 561/2004 Coll., on Preschool, Primary, Secondary, Higher Vocational and other Education (the Schools Act), as amended, and at events organized by these schools, in that the personal presence of pupils and students in secondary and higher vocational education at schools and education at conservatories is prohibited, with the exception of:
  - a) schools established alongside facilities for the performance of institutional education or protective education,
  - b) schools established by the Ministry of Justice,

- c) the practical teaching and practical preparation of pupils and students,
- d) pupils in the educational field of Practical One-year School and Practical Two-year School,
- e) individual consultations (only one pupil or student and one teacher),
- f) group consultations for pupils in the last years and pupils and students in the fourth years of six-year educational programs at conservatories or pupils and students threatened by school failure in other years, with at most 6 pupils and students in one group,
- g) conducting of final examinations, school-leaving examinations, discharge examinations and internationally recognized examinations, with the participation of at most 20 persons in the room,
- h) the conducting of examinations at higher vocational schools with the participation of at most 10 persons in the room,
- i) the holding of corrective and substitute examinations before a commission at secondary schools and conservatories,
- j) in the Hradec Králové, Plzeň and Karlovy Vary regions, pupils in the lower levels of six-year and eight-year primary schools and pupils of the first four years of eight-year conservatory curricula, under the condition that on odd weeks will not be attended by the first half of the classes and in even weeks by the other half of classes (if the number of classes is odd the number can be rounded off),

given that in-person schooling must be conducted in unchanging classes, divisions or groups of pupils or students, with the exception of practical teaching and practical preparation in accordance with letter

- c) and group consultations under letter f),

4. the operation of primary schools pursuant to the Schools Act, in that the personal presence of pupils in primary education at primary schools is prohibited, with the exception of:

- a) primary schools attached to healthcare facilities,
- b) schools established alongside facilities for the performance of institutional education or protective education,
- c) children in preparatory classes,
- d) pupils on the 1st level at a school where the number of pupils on the 1st level is no more than 75, if the building of this 1st level is structurally separated from the building of the 2nd level of the primary school, including the school canteen,
- e) pupils in the 1st level at a school which does not meet the condition under letter (d), under the condition that schooling on odd weeks will not be attended by the first half of the classes and in even weeks by the other half of the classes (if the number of classes is odd the number can be rounded off),
- f) in the Hradec Králové, Plzeň and Karlovy Vary regions, pupils in the 2nd , under the condition that schooling on odd weeks will not be attended by the first half of the classes and in even weeks by the other half of the classes (if the number of classes is odd the number can be rounded off),
- g) children in the preparatory level of special primary school,
- h) primary schools or classes established pursuant to Section 16(9) of the Schools Act,
- i) individual consultations (only one child or pupil, one pedagogical worker and possibly a legal guardian).
- j) group consultations for pupils in the 2nd level threatened by failure at school or pupils of the 9th grade, based on their needs evaluated by the school in the subjects required for admission examinations, with at most 6 pupils in one group,

in that in-person schooling must be conducted in unchanging classes of pupils or students, with the exception of group consultations pursuant to letter (j),

5. operation of preschools pursuant to the Schools Act in all regions with the exception of Hradec Králové Region, Plzeň and Karlovy Vary Region, in that the in-person presence of children at preschool education at kindergarten is prohibited, except for

- a) children fulfilling mandatory preschool education, given that they may be educated only in unchanging groups of at most 15 children,
- b) preschools and classes established pursuant to Section 16(9) of the Schools Act, and
- c) kindergartens attached to healthcare facilities,

6. the operation of primary art schools and language schools with the right to conduct state language

examinations pursuant to the Schools Act and educational institutions providing one-year foreign language courses with daytime studies pursuant to Act No. 117/1995 Coll., on State Social Support, as amended, in that the personal presence of pupils or participants in basic art education at primary art schools, at foreign language courses with daily tuition at educational institutions and language tuition at language schools with the right to conduct state language examinations is prohibited, except for:

- a) state language examinations with the participation of at most 10 people in the room,
  - b) individual consultations (one pupil or participant and one teacher),
  - c) individual in-person schooling (one pupil or participant and one teacher),
7. the operation of leisure centers, in that the personal presence of children, pupils and students and other participants in this extracurricular education is prohibited, except for:
    - a) individual consultations (one participant and one teacher), and
    - b) individual in-person teaching (one participant and one teacher).
  8. the operation of school clubs, in that the in-person presence of children, pupils and other participants in this extracurricular education is prohibited, except for children and pupils who can participate in in-person teaching according to this extraordinary measure, under the condition that only the children or pupils from one unchanging class of in-person teaching are present in the division or group,
  9. the operation of school educational and accommodation facilities, in that the provision of accommodation is prohibited to the pupils of schools and students of higher vocational schools pursuant to the Schools Act who have another place of residence in the Czech Republic, at school educational and accommodation facilities (youth homes, boarding schools), except for those pupils and students who can participate in education according to this extraordinary measure; school outings and field trips are prohibited,
  10. the operation of schools and school facilities pursuant to the Schools Act and the operation of Universities, in that education does not include singing, except for fields of primary art education, secondary and higher vocational education and study programs at universities in which singing is a core part of the framework or accredited study program, with the personal presence of no more than 6 pupils or students in the room, if other restrictions allow the presence of this number of pupils or students,
  11. the operation of schools and educational facilities pursuant to the Schools Act and the operation of universities, in that sports activities as a part of education are prohibited, except for:
    - a) nursery schools,
    - b) fields of secondary and higher vocational education and study programs at higher education institutions where sporting activity is a core part of the framework or accredited educational or study program, and
    - c) sports activity in the Hradec Králové Region, Plzeň and Karlovy Vary regions held outdoors, if permitted by other restrictions on the personal presence at schooling and under the conditions pursuant to the extraordinary measure regulating the organization of sports activities,
  12. the operation of nursery, primary and secondary schools, conservatories, higher vocational schools and educational facilities, in that access by third parties (except for children, pupils, students or participants and employees) to the school or educational facility premises is only possible in essential cases, in order to limit contact between third parties and persons on the school or facility premises,
  13. the conducting of
    - a) admission examinations for universities, colleges, secondary schools and conservatories, in that they may be conducted only with at most 20 persons in the room, and
    - b) recognition examinations pursuant to the Schools Act, in that they may be conducted only with no more than 10 persons in the room,
  14. at preschools, school groups or schools clubs, in that the in-person presence at the schooling of children at preschools and of pupils in the 1st level of primary school in school groups or schools clubs is permitted for children whose legal guardians are

- a) healthcare professionals of healthcare service providers,
- b) teaching staff who ensure in-person schooling at kindergartens, primary schools, school groups, school clubs, fields of education at practical one-year schools and practical two-year schools,
- c) teaching staff of educational facilities for the performance of institutional or protective education,
- d) employees of security corps,
- e) members of the armed forces,
- f) employees of public health protection authorities
- g) employees specified in Section 115(1) in accordance with Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended, and other employees in social services,
- h) social workers classified for the performance of social work in regional and municipal authorities in accordance with Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services, as amended,
- i) social workers and other professionals performing activities pursuant to Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on social and legal protection of children, as amended,
- j) employees of the Czech Labor Office,
- k) employees of the Czech Social Security Administration Authority and Regional Social Security Administration Authorities, or
- l) employees of the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic.

## II.

Effective from 3 May 2021, the extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health of 19 April 2021, Ref. No. MZDR 14600/2021-3/MIN/KAN, as amended by the extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health of 22 April 2021, Ref. No. 14600/2021-4/MIN/KAN, is repealed.

## III.

This Emergency Measure shall take effect on the date of its issue.

### **Rationale:**

With regard to the fact that the most common epicenters of the COVID-19 disease in an overall evaluation are schools and school facilities, including kindergartens, the operation of schools and school facilities continues to be restricted.

The restriction of the operation of schools and school facilities is ordered, in that the personal presence of children, pupils and students in education is restricted with the specified exceptions. Furthermore, the operation of educational and accommodation facilities is restricted, in that accommodation is provided only to pupils and students who do not have another dwelling in the Czech Republic or who participate in schooling pursuant to this extraordinary measure. Sports activities and singing are also restricted, in that they cannot be a part of schooling with the exceptions pursuant to this extraordinary measure.

Data confirm that the spread of COVID-19 at schools is not negligible.

The following summary provides the main results of an evaluation of the risk of the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus at schools and school facilities and its dependence on age.

Based on data from the Czech Republic (ÚZIS)<sup>1 2</sup>:

- According to the results of the epidemiological surveys by regional public health authorities, schools consistently report a significant number of outbreaks of COVID-19 contagion; with respect to absolute disease figures, the school collective is the most common epicenter of the

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<sup>1</sup> See the ÚZIS presentation available at:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1rEaXGTexjmKZu2MUJGc6thr0RtZaWBJi/present?ueb=true#slide=id.p29>.

<sup>2</sup> See presentation: <https://tarantula.ruk.cuni.cz/AKTUALITY-11899-version1-rizikovost-skolního-prostředí-pro-sireni-COVIDu-19.pdf>.

given disease.

- In terms of size, these outbreaks are rather small, with an average of 5.1 positive cases reported per facility. The reason may be the timely detection of infection and good traceability of the spread in the defined school collectives.
- The incidence rises rapidly when schools open, depending also on the age of the infected persons.

Based on data from the Czech Republic and abroad from the analytic report of the CUNI Think Tank Education 21<sup>2</sup>:

- Since of the end of summer and during the autumn, the incidence of COVID-19 in all age groups, including children and adolescents, has risen in the Czech Republic and many other countries;
- among pupil of secondary schools, the incidence is generally higher than among primary school (PS) pupils;
- among pupils of the 2nd level of PS, the incidence is generally lower than among adults;
- immediately after the start of the school year, the incidence among 2nd level PS pupils and secondary school pupils rose steeply; however, the related data do not allow us to definitely determine whether the contagion occurred at schools or outside them, or to what degree these age groups contributed to the subsequent escalation of the epidemic in October; during the “autumn lockdown” in the Czech Republic, the share of proven infections among children aged 3-6 to 0-2 years increased compared to other age groups; with a certain delay, this share also increased among children aged 3-6 to 2 years; the link between the contagion and the presence at preschools seems probable in the 3 to 6 year age group, but it cannot be proven whether this fact substantially affected the overall course of the epidemic.

A comprehensive analysis of the spread of COVID-19 at schools in the USA<sup>3</sup> indicates that the contagion spreads more at households where children attend in-person schooling, depending also on the age/attended grade (the older the child, the higher the risk). Furthermore, this study also presents 1 a comparison of the conditions and requirements to minimize or eliminate this risk, also for grades corresponding to Czech secondary school pupils. An important factor in limiting the risk is partial in-person teaching and the continued implementation of systemic measures (the more measures, the lower the risk).

Studies of the impacts of blanket measures from the spring wave of COVID-19 in

2 2020 state varying impacts of the closing of schools; one of the highest impacts is determined by Haug et al.<sup>4</sup>, according to whom the closing of schools in the USA may have reduced the incidence and mortality by up to 60%.

According to the agent model of a primary school, based on a real graph of social ties and contacts between pupils and teachers at one PS, developed by BISOP in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports<sup>5</sup>:

- In the first level of the PS, COVID-19 spreads significantly less than in the 2nd level of PS. Although one quarter more pupils attend the 1st level (about one class), the 1st level of the PS accounts for only about 42% of infections at the school. This confirms the inference that smaller children have fewer intense social contacts and also barely ever change the collective or teacher during teaching.

Based on the agency model developed in cooperation with BISOP<sup>6</sup>, the weekly alternative of entire classes at PS should reduce the spread of COVID-19 in school by up to 80% compared to the normal situation even without other systemic measures, with which the effect would be even greater.

The significant reduction of the risk resulting from the weekly alternation of groups through rotation is confirmed also by another study based on a model of school operations. Based on the model from the USA<sup>7</sup>, the weekly rotation of in-person and remote schooling of entire classes fundamentally reduces the

<sup>3</sup> Lessler J, et al. Household COVID-19 risk and in-person schooling <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.02.27.21252597>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-020-01009-0>.

<sup>5</sup> BISOP: <https://www.bisop.eu/vyzkumna-zpravabisop-vytvoril-model-sireni-COVIDu-19-na-zakladnich-skolach/>.

<sup>6</sup> BISOP: <https://www.bisop.eu/vyzkumna-zpravabisop-vytvoril-model-sireni-COVIDu-19-na-zakladnich-skolach/>.

<sup>7</sup> (Figure 4) McGee R.S et al. Model-driven mitigation measures for reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://doi>

risk that the school will become a point of contagion for pupils and teachers, and the related risk of a disease outbreak.

Hence, the weekly rotation of entire classes is proving to be a key and effective measure with a decisive effect on the spread of COVID-19, which does not drastically affect school operation compared to other alternatives like the splitting of classes, applied e.g. in autumn 2020 in Israel. Another advantage of the measure is its low sensitivity to the level of individual observance of measures.

In addition to teaching in only partial mode using rotation, it is necessary to supplement this measure using other systemic measures. The aforementioned comprehensive American study examining the impact of the spread of COVID-19 at schools in the USA<sup>8</sup> states that if 7 or more regular systemic measures are implemented, the risk of increased contagion at schools is marginal. The most effective systemic measures include the restriction of extracurricular activities, daily screening of symptoms, protection of airways by pupils and teachers, sufficient ventilation and moving part of the teaching outdoors.

According to the agency school model developed in cooperation with BISOP, the greatest transmission of infection (47%) occurs among children in the same class: therefore, systemic measures in class and during recess are crucial. The spread of the infection is relatively lower between children from different classes.

Another extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health maximally extended the obligation to protect the airways using FFP2 class respirators or surgical face masks, and yet another extraordinary measure established the obligation to test the employees of schools and school facilities, as well as children, pupils and students for the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Given the community character of the contagion, it is currently still necessary to observe the blanket extraordinary measures across the Czech Republic, given that even stricter measures will be applied in the most afflicted areas.

Due to the still high numbers of infected and hospitalized persons, it is essential to continue restricting the operation of schools and school facilities, with justified exceptions, and to use remote schooling methods. Distance learning at least partly compensates for the prohibition against in-person presence and preserves the right to an education. Exercising the constitutionally-guaranteed right to an education is not suspended in connection with the adoption of this extraordinary measure, because pupils and students are still provided with education in the “best available form.”

Despite the given reasons for restricting the operation of schools and school facilities, there are noteworthy reasons for which an exemption from the given restriction is granted.

**Re: point I/1 - restriction of universities**

An exception from the prohibition applies to holding examinations with a maximum of 10 people attending. At university, it is not possible to hold certain examinations remotely, and for this reason the holding of in-person examinations is permitted to avoid obstructing studies. Furthermore, the maximum capacity of persons at an individual examination is limited to reduce the risk of the transmission of the coronavirus.

An exception in accordance with letter a) is enabled because practical and clinical teaching and practical experience for students cannot be fully replaced by distance learning and with regard to the fact that in-person presence at such education has been limited for a longer time, so it is necessary to renew it as a priority in the final years in order to enable the relevant students to complete their studies. Laboratory, experimental and artistic teaching for students in final years is regarded as clinical and practical teaching and practical experience in accordance with this provision.

The exception pursuant to letter b) is permitted because students in medical and pedagogical fields, as part of their practical experience, perform activities directly at healthcare facilities or social service

[.org/10.1101/2021.01.22.21250282](https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.01.22.21250282)

<sup>8</sup> Lessler J, et al. Household COVID-19 risk and in-person schooling <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.02.27.21252597>.

facilities. These are generally students who have already acquired the required competences during their studies and can thus perform those activities which would otherwise be reserved for hospital or school staff. With their activities, these students may significantly help the relevant healthcare facilities, which may be facing a shortage of their own staff due to the coronavirus. The same applies to students in pedagogical fields, whose participation in practical experience may help the already burdened sector of schools and school facilities.

The exception under letter c) allows individual consultations, during which only the student and relevant academic worker are present. In such cases, by observing the other anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways) and observing hygienic measures, the risk of transmission of coronavirus is minimized. Simultaneously, this exception allows for the supplementing of education during personal detailed consultation in those areas which the student did not sufficiently grasp during remote schooling, etc. The exception also applies to the use of individual counseling services in the presence of one student and one (expert) teacher, the aim of which is primarily to allow personal psychological counseling, because school experience and surveys among students indicate that students are currently facing a number of mental problems and not everything can be resolved only via remote counseling.

**Re: point I/2 - prohibition of providing accommodation to university students**

The exception under point 2 is essential so that persons who do not have another dwelling in the Czech Republic can remain at their accommodation facility; this option is logically also preserved for persons who are allowed to be present at in-person schooling.

**Re: point I/3 - restriction of operation of secondary schools and specialized colleges and conservatories**

The exception under point 3(a) and (b) is stipulated because in these cases there is control over the movement and meeting of persons. These are facilities for a pre-defined group of people who move about one facility (self-contained or even closed). There is not a high degree of contacts with persons other than those placed in the facilities for institutional or protective education, respectively facilities established by the Ministry of Justice. Hence, these persons meet in any case and there is no reason to limit their meeting within the school, respectively during education.

The exception in accordance with point 3(c) enables pupils and students of all years at secondary schools, higher vocational schools and conservatories to be present in person at practical teaching and practical preparation. Practical teaching is very hard to realize using distance learning, so as part of the relaxation of measures, priority is given to in-person presence at practical teaching.

The exception under point 3(d) is stipulated because remote schooling at the given schools is very problematic and cannot preserve the right to education to such a degree as other schools. In order to preserve access to education, these pupils are permitted to attend in-person schooling.

The exception under point 3(e) allows one pupil or student to meet with the teacher at individual consultations. In these cases, by observing the other anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways) and observing hygiene measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized and the education can be carried out within personal detailed consultation in those areas which the pupil has trouble understanding during distance learning, etc.

The exception under point 3(i) allows group consultations with at most 6 pupils. This exception is stipulated for the final years, so as to allow them to prepare for school-leaving and final examinations and discharge examinations. Furthermore, group consultations are designated for pupils in all years who are threatened by failure in school. These are mainly pupils who are behind in remote schooling for various reasons.

The exceptions under letter g), h) and i) are stipulated for selected examinations. The remote conducting of these examinations may in many cases be problematic or unfeasible. The foregoing applies especially to final and school-leaving examinations or discharge examinations. Under letter i), in-person commission-based corrective and substitute examinations are permitted, which are performed in this school year by pupils in the final years of secondary schools and conservatories pursuant to the general measure issued pursuant to Section 184a of the Schools Act.

The exception under letter j) allows pupils in the lower levels of six-year and eight-year high schools and pupils in the first four years of eight-year conservatory curricula in selected regions to attend in-person schooling on a rotating basis. Given that it is possible for pupils on the 2nd level to attend in-person schooling within the same system in these regions, the given is also permitted for pupils who would have been allowed to attend schooling within the same season due to the same level of education in these years (primary education).

V In the districts of the Karlovy Vary, Plzeň and Hradec Králové regions, it is possible to observe a long-term and continual decrease not only in the number of cases of COVID-19, but also in the number of patients hospitalized, including patients in intensive care units. The overall situation in such regions has been stabilized over the long term, which is shown by the values of the monitored indicators used for assessing trends in the epidemic, using the 7-day incidence value, the 7-day rolling average and numbers of total hospitalizations, including the numbers of patients in intensive care units.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové Region, the 7-day incidence is around 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per 7 days, which is a value three times lower than the national average, while in the Plzeň Region the 7-day incidence value is on the limit of 100 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, meaning far below the national average.

The daily number of new cases of COVID-19 in individual districts of the Karlovy Vary region is in single digits, while the 7-day rolling average in this region is less than 20 cases; the situation is similar in the Hradec Králové region, where the daily average is around 40 cases, while in the Plzeň region this value is around 80 cases on average per day. An important indicator of the total population load is the number of cases in the 65+ age category.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové regions, only single units of cases among persons aged over 65 are reported, while in the Plzeň region the daily average is about 10 persons in this age category. Single-digit daily figures are reported in the individual districts of the assessed regions in the 0 to 5 years and 6 to 15 years age categories.

V In the given regions, single numbers of new cases of the disease in persons aged 65 and over are reported each day on average. All the parameters monitored show the overall stabilization and current positive trends in the epidemiological situation in all three regions and for this reason in such regions it is possible to allow the presence of pupils on lower-levels of six-year and eight-year high schools and pupils in the first four years of eight-year conservatory curricula.

The exceptions under letter j) reflect the favorable development of the epidemiological situation which allows in-person schooling on a rotating basis in the Karlovy Vary, Plzeň and Hradec Králové regions for the students of secondary schools and conservatories, in the scope of the lower levels of six-year or eight-year high schools or conservatories, in the scope of the years where mandatory school attendance is fulfilled.

#### **Re: point I/4 - restriction of the operation of primary schools**

The exception under point 4(a) and (b) is stipulated because in these cases there is control over the movement of and meeting between persons. Hence, there is not a high degree of contacts with persons other than those placed in the facilities for institutional or protective education, respectively facilities established by healthcare facilities. At present, there is no reason to restrict the provision of education in these cases, where the children are together at the relevant facility practically all day.

The exception under letter c) and g) is stipulated for children who attend the preparatory classes of primary school and learn here within mandatory preschool education, which is not prohibited. Hence, they must be treated in this regard in the same manner as children who are e.g. of the same age and fulfill the mandatory preschool education within preschools.

The exception under point 4(d) and (e) applies to pupils for whom in-person schooling is crucial because, given their age, in-person schooling for these pupils cannot be substituted and remote schooling would be the most problematic and least effective for them. Reading and writing in the 1st year is taught practically only through in-person teaching. Likewise, it is highly desirable for the remaining years of the first level of PS to return to in-person teaching, because these pupils underwent distance learning for a



very long period of many months in the past school year. Rotational teaching is also stipulated because the weekly rotation of entire classes is proving to be a key and effective measure with a decisive effect on the spread of COVID-19 and does not drastically affect school operations compared to other alternatives like the splitting of classes as applied e.g. in the autumn of 2020 in Israel (more details in the general part of the rationale). Rotation will not apply to the first levels, where the total number of pupils in the entire first level of a PS does not exceed 75 and the first level building is structurally separated from the 2nd level building, including the school canteen. At these “small” 1st levels of PS, there are small class collectives (on average there are at most 15 pupils per class), which allows the adoption of adequate measures to reduce the risk of contagion (e.g. adequate distancing), and given the nature of the matter there is a low risk of spreading the virus among people, unlike large class collectives.

The exception under letter f) allows pupils of the 2nd level of primary school in selected regions to attend in-person schooling on a rotating basis. In the districts of the Karlovy Vary Region and Hradec Králové Region, it is possible to observe a long-term and continual decrease not only in the number of cases of COVID-19, but also in the number of patients hospitalized, including patients in intensive care units. The overall situation in such regions has been stabilized over the long term, which is shown by the values of the monitored indicators used for assessing trends in the epidemic, using the 7-day incidence value, the 7-day rolling average and numbers of total hospitalizations, including the numbers of patients in intensive care units. In the said regions, the 7-day incidence is below the level of 100 cases per 100,000 people, i.e. the value is more than twice as low as the national average; the situation with the 7-day rolling average is similar.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové Region, the 7-day incidence is around 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per 7 days, which is a value three times lower than the national average, while in the Plzeň Region the 7-day incidence value is on the limit of 100 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, meaning far below the national average.

The daily number of new cases of COVID-19 in individual districts of the Karlovy Vary region is in single digits, while the 7-day rolling average in this region is less than 20 cases; the situation is similar in the Hradec Králové region, where the daily average is around 40 cases, while in the Plzeň region this value is around 80 cases on average per day.

An important indicator of the total population load is the number of cases in the 65+ age category.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové regions, only single units of cases among persons aged over 65 are reported, while in the Plzeň region the daily average is about 10 persons in this age category. Single-digit daily figures are reported in the individual districts of the assessed regions in the 0 to 5 years and 6 to 15 years age categories.

V In both regions, single numbers of new cases of the disease in persons aged 65 and over are reported each day on average. All the parameters monitored show the overall stabilization and current positive trends in the epidemiological situation in all three regions and for this reason in such regions it is possible to allow the presence of pupils on lower-levels of six-year and eight-year high schools and pupils in the first four years of eight-year conservatory curricula.

Given the favorable development of the epidemiological situation, in-person schooling in rotating form for pupils on the 2nd level of primary schools is permitted in the Karlovy Vary, Plzeň and Hradec Králové regions.

The exception under letter (h) is stipulated because remote schooling at the given schools is very problematic. In order to preserve access to education, these pupils are permitted to attend in-person schooling.

The exception under letter (i) allows one pupil to meet with the teacher at individual consultations. In these cases, by observing the necessary anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways) and observing hygienic measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized and the education can be carried out within personal detailed consultation in those areas which the pupil did not entirely grasp, etc.

The exception under letter j) allows group consultations with at most 6 pupils. This group consultation is permitted for pupils in the 2nd level of PS who for some reason are disadvantaged by distance learning. This may mean e.g. insufficient material support during distance learning. Likewise, group consultations are allowed for pupils in the 9th grade, who are currently preparing for admission examinations.

**Re: point I/5 - restriction of the operation of preschools**

With regard to epidemiological trends, it is necessary to maintain limits on preschool education throughout the territory of the Czech Republic with the exception of two regions where trends in the epidemic are more favorable.

V In the districts of the Karlovy Vary, Plzeň and Hradec Králové regions, it is possible to observe a long-term and continual decrease not only in the number of cases of COVID-19, but also in the number of patients hospitalized, including patients in intensive care units. The overall situation in such regions has been stabilized over the long term, which is shown by the values of the monitored indicators used for assessing trends in the epidemic, using the 7-day incidence value, the 7-day rolling average and numbers of total hospitalizations, including the numbers of patients in intensive care units.

V In these regions, the 7-day incidence is below the level of 100 cases per 100,000 people, i.e. the value is more than twice as low as the national average; the situation with the 7-day rolling average is similar. The situation concerning hospital care is also stabilized, where numbers of total hospitalizations and hospitalizations in intensive care units are the lowest since last October, which is related to the number of cases of COVID-19 found in senior citizens/vulnerable groups of people. In these regions, single numbers of new cases of the disease in persons aged 65 and over are reported each day on average. All the monitored parameters show the overall stabilization and current positive trends in the epidemiological situation in both the regions and for this reason in all these regions it is possible to enable the presence of children in preschool facilities without an age limitation.

The following exceptions are made with regard to the across-the-board prohibition of in-person attendance at a kindergarten:

The exception under letter a) allows the in-person presence of children with mandatory preschool education. Given the burden on the entire system (including mobility in public transit, etc.), it is essential to limit the easing of measures at preschools to only those children with mandatory preschool education. The foregoing will also provide preschools with the opportunity to create smaller groups of children (up to 15 persons), both in spatial and personnel terms. Children in the preschool year have the greatest need for education given their preparation to enter primary school.

The exception under letter b) is stipulated because distance learning at the relevant schools is very problematic. In order to preserve access to education, these pupils are permitted to attend in-person schooling.

The exception under letter c) is stipulated because in these cases there is control over the movement of and meeting between persons. There is not a high degree of contacts with persons other than those placed in the facilities established by healthcare facilities. At present, there is no reason to restrict the provision of education in these cases, where the children are together at the given facility practically all day.

**Re: point I/6 - restriction of elementary artistic and language education**

The exception under letter (a) allows the holding of state language examinations under systemic measures. State language examinations cannot be held remotely, or only with great difficulty, which is why they are granted an exception.

The exception under letter b) allows one pupil or participant to meet with the teacher at individual consultations. In these cases, by observing the necessary anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways and sufficient distancing) and observing hygienic measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized and the education can be carried out within personal detailed consultation in those areas which the pupil or participant did not entirely grasp, etc.

The exception under letter (c) allows one pupil or participant to meet with their teacher within individual in-person teaching. Hence, it is possible to conduct fully-fledged in-person teaching, but only on a

one-on-one basis. In such cases, by observing the other anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways and sufficient distancing) and observing hygiene measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized.

**Re: point I/7 - restriction of operation of leisure centers**

The exception under letter (a) allows one participant to meet with their teacher at individual consultations. In such cases, by observing the necessary anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways and sufficient distancing) and observing hygiene measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized.

The exception under letter b) allows one participant to meet with their teacher within individual in-person teaching. Hence, it is possible to conduct fully-fledged in-person teaching, but only on a one-on-one basis. In such cases, by observing the necessary anti-epidemic measures (especially protection of the airways and sufficient distancing) and observing hygiene measures, the risk of transmission of the coronavirus is minimized.

**Re: point I/8 - restriction of operation of school groups and school clubs**

The exception under point 8 allows the provision of extracurricular education for pupils who are allowed to attend in-person schooling. Given that the condition of homogeneity of individual groups is stipulated, there will not be any mixing of pupils from individual classes and the risk of contagion will not be significantly increased by this activity.

**Re: point I/9 - restriction of operation of educational and accommodation facilities**

The exception under point 9 is essential so that persons who do not have another dwelling in the Czech Republic can remain at their accommodation facility; this option is logically also preserved for persons who are allowed to be present for education.

**Re: point I/10 - restriction of singing as a part of education**

The exception is stipulated because singing is the main educational activities for these pupils and students, and its prohibition would obstruct their education. If this exception were not stipulated, this would limit the education of these pupils and students only to secondary or optional subjects.

**Re: point I/11 - restriction of sports activity as a part of education**

The exception under letter a) is stipulated because the exercise for children at kindergartens is an integral part of many activities and education would suffer from the absence thereof.

The exception under letter b) is stipulated because sports activity is the main educational activity for these pupils and students, and its prohibition would obstruct their education. If this exception were not stipulated, this would limit the education of these pupils and students only to secondary or optional subjects.

The exception under letter c) permits sports activity in selected regions as a part of education at primary schools, and that only on outdoor sports grounds.

V In the districts of the Karlovy Vary, Plzeň and Hradec Králové regions, it is possible to observe a long-term and continual decrease not only in the number of cases of COVID-19, but also in the number of patients hospitalized, including patients in intensive care units. The overall situation in such regions has been stabilized over the long term, which is shown by the values of the monitored indicators used for assessing trends in the epidemic, using the 7-day incidence value, the 7-day rolling average and numbers of total hospitalizations, including the numbers of patients in intensive care units.

V In these regions, the 7-day incidence is below the level of 100 cases per 100,000 people, i.e. the value is more than twice as low as the national average; the situation with the 7-day rolling average is similar.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové Region, the 7-day incidence is around 50 cases per 100,000 inhabitants per 7 days, which is a value three times lower than the national average, while in the Plzeň Region the 7-day incidence value is on the limit of 100 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, meaning far below the national average.

The daily number of new cases of COVID-19 in individual districts of the Karlovy Vary region is in single

digits, while the 7-day rolling average in this region is less than 20 cases; the situation is similar in the Hradec Králové region, where the daily average is around 40 cases, while in the Plzeň region this value is around 80 cases on average per day.

An important indicator of the total population load is the number of cases in the 65+ age category.

V In the Karlovy Vary and Hradec Králové regions, only single units of cases among persons aged over 65 are reported, while in the Plzeň region the daily average is about 10 persons in this age category. Single-digit daily figures are reported in the individual districts of the assessed regions in the 0 to 5 years and 6 to 15 years age categories.

V In the given regions, single numbers of new cases of the disease in persons aged 65 and over are reported each day on average. All the parameters monitored show the overall stabilization and current positive trends in the epidemiological situation in all three regions and for this reason in such regions it is possible to allow sports activities on outdoor sports grounds, where the risk of contagion is lower than on indoor sports grounds.

The exception under letter a) is stipulated because the exercise for children at kindergartens is an integral part of many activities and education would suffer from the absence thereof.

The exception under letter b) is stipulated because sports activity is the main educational activity for these pupils and students, and its prohibition would obstruct their education. If this exception were not stipulated, this would limit the education of these pupils and students only to secondary or optional subjects.

The exception under letter c) is permitted due to the current favorable development of the epidemiological situation in the incidence of COVID-19 in these regions.

#### **Re point I/12 - prohibition of access to schools for third parties**

In order to prevent the spread of contagion from third parties, it is stipulated that access by these persons is possible only in the essential cases, whereas their contact with pupils, students and staff on school premises is restricted. An essential case is e.g. the fulfillment of the school's contractual obligations or the access of legal guardians as escorts, for instance to help with self-testing, etc. In all cases, it is necessary to observe the limitation of contact between third parties and persons on school premises (typically with pupils and school staff).

#### **Re: point I/13 - exemptions from the restriction of conducting certain examinations**

The exception under letter (a) allows the conducting of admission examinations, provided that they are attended (at one moment in one room) by at most 20 persons. In many cases, entrance examinations cannot be conducted based only on an assessment of written references, meaning that in-person tests or evaluations of the applicants' talent must be performed, which cannot be carried out remotely. In order to limit the risk of coronavirus transmission, the maximum number of people who can attend the entrance procedure simultaneously is limited, naturally while observing all the hygiene measures.

The exception under letter b) allows the conducting of recognition examinations provided systemic measures are observed. Recognition examinations cannot be held remotely, or only with great difficulty, which is why they are granted an exception.

#### **Re: point I/14 - exceptions for the children of legal guardians in designated professions**

The prohibition of in-person schooling of children and pupils at schools also means that care for children and pupils aged 2 to 10 years cannot be ensured along with the provision of in-person schooling (or older pupils who need more intensive attention). Due to the lack of ensured care, the legal guardians of these children and pupils would have to ensure their care. If the legal guardians of children and pupils perform an occupation which is essential in fighting the epidemic, it is necessary to ensure care for their children.

These groups of occupations include the employees of healthcare service providers, teaching staff who ensure in-person schooling (and thereby this care) at schools or school facilities, the employees of security corps, members of the armed forces, employees of public health protection authorities, employees listed in Section 115(1) and other employees in social services pursuant to Act No. 108/2006

Coll., on Social Services, as amended, employees of the Czech Labor Office, employees of the Czech Social Security Administration and district offices of the social security administration, and employees of the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic.

**Re: point II**

Because the rules for the presence of children, pupils and students at schools and school facilities are being replaced with a new extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health for reasons of clarity, the existing measure must be cancelled.

**Prof. MUDr. Petr Arenberger, DrSc., MBA, undersigned  
Minister of Health**