



**The
Directorate
of Health**

Chief Epidemiologist

**School principals
Teachers
Parents**

Reykjavík, 24 March
2020 2001208/6.1.1/jjh

Re: Schooling of children during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Director of Health and the Chief Epidemiologist wish to reiterate how important it is that children in nursery and primary schools continue their school attendance despite the limits placed on school activities.

Everyone is aware of the necessity of curbing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The object of actions is to increase the likelihood that the healthcare system will be able to care for all those who are infected by COVID-19 in Iceland while being able to handle other emergency services at the same time.

In the opinion of the Chief Epidemiologist, the likelihood of infection from small children is considerably less than from adults as investigations in Iceland and in the other Nordic countries have shown that infection in children is rare. One may surmise, therefore, that there is no reason to further limit school activities for quarantine purposes.

The situation is being closely monitored and the Director of Health and the Chief Epidemiologist would like to issue the following message to school principals, teachers and the staff of the schools and the parents of students in nursery and primary schools.

- Healthy children should continue to attend their school. Their schooling is important to them, as are the activities and discipline involved.
- Teachers and school staff are frontline workers in the current circumstances. The schools are an important component in our society and the contribution of the educational community is extremely important in this context. The situation is complicated and calls for a variety of solutions, endurance and flexibility from us all.
- Teachers and employees in risk groups should employ the strictest care and schools are to follow their own response plan in the event of suspected infection.

Pórolfur Guðnason Chief Epidemiologist [*sign.*]

Alma D. Möller Director of Health [*sign.*]