

Students in China's virus centre Wuhan return to school

May 6 2020

Chinese youngsters in the global virus epicentre of Wuhan filed back to class on Wednesday, wearing masks and walking in single file past thermal scanners.

Senior school students in 121 institutions were back in front of chalk boards and digital displays for the first time since their city—the ground zero of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic—shut down in January.

"School is finally reopening!" posted one user of Weibo, China's Twitter-like short messaging platform.

"This is the first time that I'm so happy to go back to school, although I have to sit a monthly examination on the 8th."

Teenagers sat at individual desks spaced a metre (3.3 feet) apart, seeing their teachers in the flesh after months of distance learning.

Wednesday's back-to-school was the latest step in a gradual normalising of life in Wuhan and surrounding Hubei province.

The city, where the coronavirus appeared late last year before spreading around the world, was locked down for 76 days and only reopened last month.

Only the province's oldest students were present on Wednesday—vocational students and seniors who are due to take the

make-or-break university entrance exams.

Return dates have generally not been confirmed for junior and [middle school students](#), although some localities have allowed their return as well.

Officials in Wuhan say students and staff must all have had virus tests before going back to school, and campuses have been disinfected and cleaned.

In preparation for reopening, some schools spaced out their desks and organised [smaller class sizes](#), according to local media.

Thermal scanners greeted everyone walking through [school](#) gates, and anyone with a high temperature was not allowed in.

State-run China Daily said some places arranged staggered arrival times for teachers and students.

Armed [police officers](#) were seen standing guard at the entrance of Wuhan No.17 Middle School, with officers also pictured outside other schools around the province.

Elsewhere in China, schools that have been closed or online-only since January began gradually reopening last month, with Beijing and Shanghai letting some students return last week.

China's major cities are gradually returning to normal after imposing strict travel restrictions and closing huge swathes of the economy to control the spread of the virus.

In recent months infections nationwide have dwindled, and there have been no new cases reported in Hubei province for over a month.

Over a five-day holiday to start the month, there were 115 million domestic trips, with many tourist sites reopening—although with limited attendance.

Shanghai Disneyland will reopen next week, the entertainment giant said Tuesday, with enhanced [safety measures](#) including temperature screening and social distancing.

However, most foreigners are still banned from entering the country as China works to contain infections being brought in from overseas.

Chinese nationals returning home must undergo 14 days of quarantine.

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