

Back to school in masks as Singapore eases virus curbs

June 2 2020



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Pupils wearing face masks returned to school in Singapore on Tuesday and some workplaces re-opened as coronavirus restrictions were eased in the hard-hit city-state.

Singapore initially kept infections low through a strict regime of testing and contact-tracing, only for major outbreaks to emerge from crowded dormitories housing low-paid [foreign workers](#).

The country has recorded over 35,000 cases—the highest official tally in Southeast Asia—with the vast majority among workers from the dorms. The death toll stands at 24.

Authorities imposed a partial lockdown in early April, with schools and most workplaces told to close, and people only allowed to leave home for essential purposes.

But with new infections slowing and no major outbreaks outside dorms, the government began easing measures Tuesday, with certain age groups allowed back to school and some workplaces re-opening.

Pupils had their temperatures checked as they arrived at one pre-school following the lengthy break.

Cheryl Chan, who was dropping off her five-year-old son, said he was "super-excited".

"He woke up early in the morning telling me 'Mama it's time for me to brush my teeth and go to [school](#)'," she said.

Chan said she felt "happy, definitely, a little relieved as well" by the loosening of restrictions.

In the first phase of loosening the lockdown, manufacturing firms, air conditioning maintenance businesses and pet shops are among those allowed to re-open.

A third of the workforce is expected to resume activity under Tuesday's

easing, but the rest—including most office staff—must continue from home if they can, and those not covered are still only allowed out for essential reasons.

While there were more people out and about Tuesday morning, the subway and streets remained relatively quiet.

After facing criticism over the migrant [worker outbreak](#), the government announced Monday it would build new dormitories with improved standards, such as reducing the number of people per room.

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