

Millions return to school in Italy after virus closure

September 14 2020



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Millions of Italian children returned to the classroom on Monday as most schools reopened more than six months after they were closed to curb the coronavirus pandemic.

Although some Italian schools opened earlier this month, roughly 5.6 million students from a total of eight million went back to [school](#) on Monday, confronting a new reality of restrictions.

Italy was one of the first in Europe to be hit by the pandemic, which has now officially killed over 35,500 people out of a total of 280,000 cases.

Premier Giuseppe Conte admitted on Sunday that Italian schools faced a difficult situation, including a lack of teachers, single-seat benches and [surgical masks](#).

"There will be difficulties and inconveniences, especially in the beginning," Conte wrote on Facebook.

He also saluted teachers, who he said had "made an extraordinary effort in the months of confinement to continue lessons and distant learning".

"We are grateful to you," he said.

With the country registering more than 1,500 infections a day, Conte also had particular words for youngsters.

"You have to do your part. You have to commit yourselves to the rules of caution that will allow you to protect your health and the health of the people you love," he said.

Italian Education Minister Lucia Azzolina said more than 5,000 extra classrooms had been created to give pupils more space.

Nevertheless, some southern regions like Puglia and Calabria already postponed the reopening until September 24, over concerns they were not ready to meet all the new requirements.

Italian officials said the back-to-school strategy involved immediate quarantine of those "in close contact" with a student or [teacher](#) testing positive.

After a positive result, pupils will be allowed back to school only after returning two negatives, carried out a day apart.

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