

Germany announces new coronavirus measures for fall, winter

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The German government on Wednesday said basic coronavirus requirements would remain in place during the coming fall and winter, when experts expect COVID-19 cases to rise again as people spend more

time indoors.

Face masks and presenting proof of a negative coronavirus test will be mandatory from October until early April at hospitals, nursing homes and similar institutions with [vulnerable people](#).

Passengers on airplanes and making long-distance trips by train and bus also will have to wear masks during that period, as they do now.

However, Germany's 16 states have the authority to adopt their own rules depending on how severely the virus affects their areas. State governments could decide to require masks on local public transportation, in schools for students in fifth grade and up, and at public indoor events.

Community facilities such as schools, prisons or asylum-seeker shelters may implement regular testing again if COVID-19 case numbers rise, Germany's health and justice ministers said in a joint statement.

The government also plans a fall vaccination campaign.

"Germany should be better prepared for the next coronavirus winter than in previous years," Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said.

Justice Minister Marco Buschmann said a special effort would be made to keep schools open, while states will "only be able to impose a mask requirement at schools if this is necessary in order to be able to continue to provide in-person teaching."

"Children have a right to school education and a [school](#) day that is as carefree as possible. School closures must therefore not be allowed," Buschmann said.

The new regulations still need to go to Cabinet and parliament for approval but are expected to pass.

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