New schedule for final school exams in North Rhine-Westphalia

Secretary Gebauer: We will provide reliable exam preparation time for students

The Ministry of School and Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia notifies:

Düsseldorf, March 27th, 2020. Today, School and Education Secretary Yvonne Gebauer presented the new schedule for the final school exams in North Rhine-Westphalia. Secretary Gebauer stated: “Due to the current developments the state government considers the postponement of the upcoming examinations to be necessary and appropriate. We are now giving our students planning reliability so that they can prepare for their exams in the best possible way. In doing so, we ensure fair conditions.” She continued, “Needless to say, exam procedures will pay particular attention to infection protection. The health of our teachers and students is our top priority.”

The Abitur examinations for approximately 88,000 prospective high school graduates at grammar schools, comprehensive schools, colleges of further education and Waldorf schools as well as at vocational colleges will therefore commence on Tuesday, May 12, 2020. The last exam date will be Monday, May 25. Pupils unable to take their exams on the central dates will have the opportunity to resit them on a follow-up date. By reducing the marking period, the Abitur reports can then be issued, as planned, no later than June 27th. The schedule for the Abitur examination 2020 was designed in such a way that it works in compliance with vacation and holiday regulations. However, due to these changes of schedule the day after Ascension Day (Christi Himmelfahrt) will now also be used for the exams.

School Secretary Gebauer said, “Over the past few days, it has been important to me to take decisions considering all the federal states. Therefore, I will encourage coordination talks between the states in the next few days to achieve an aligned
procedure for the Abitur exams in Germany. However, due to the stipulations of further exam deferral of individual states, the chances for this are limited."

The scheduling of the final exams at other school types and in other grades will also be adjusted: The start of the central exams in class 10 (ZP10) in the subjects mathematics, English and German at secondary and comprehensive schools as well as existing G9 grammar schools, colleges of further education and project schools (Primus- und Gemeinschaftsschule) are being postponed for five days. Exams will also commence on May 12th.

The examination procedures for 60,000 pupils in other vocational college classes will also have to be rescheduled and implemented before the summer holidays. This applies in particular to exams for the acquisition of technical college entrance qualification (Fachhochschulreife) in various educational programs as well as a variety of exams for professional qualifications according to state law, for example educators, nannies or electro-technical assistants with a medical technology profile.

It is crucial for the state government that all upcoming school exams will, by all means, take place under strict consideration of infection control. “For the exams we will certainly take special precautions to protect the health of the examinees and the supervising teachers. Together with the Ministry of Health, the school authorities and experts from science and medicine, we will develop mandatory guidelines for this. The recommendations of these experts are the guidelines for our actions,” concluded Secretary Gebauer.