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To parents and guardians of
pupils of schools in Canton Bern

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Bern, 30 April 2020

Schools are reopening

Dear parents and guardians,
Dear pupils,

Schools will be opening their doors again on 11 May 2020. This is great news!

These past weeks have been an entirely new experience and a big challenge for all of us. Everyone has done a great job – the teachers, the heads of schools, the staff of childcare programmes and, of course, you and your families. I would like to thank everyone for this.

We intend to take a cautious approach to relaunching lessons. On the first two days, instruction will take place in half-class groups; the head of your school will send you the necessary information. In a first phase, the teaching staff will discuss and practice the health protection measures with the pupils. These measures are certain to continue to shape daily life at the schools for a long time to come. Wherever possible, instruction with the entire class will begin again on 13 May 2020.

We are asking the teaching staff to pay particular attention to identifying any gaps or deficits in the learning progress of children in their classes. Everyone should be allowed enough time to settle back into the school-day routine. Not everything is going to run smoothly right from the start. But we know that we can count on the heads of schools and the teachers, as well as on your dedication and good cooperation on all sides.

No children or adolescents should be placed at a disadvantage by this crisis: this is a point of major concern for me. With respect to the assessment reports before the summer holidays, this means that assessments that count towards the year-end report should be kept to a minimum and measured judgement be used. As a general principle, all performances prior to 16 March 2020 will be taken into account, and between 11 May 2020 and the end of the school year, only those competencies that pupils have had sufficient opportunity to develop further and practice will be tested. In addition, only work resulting in an improvement in a pupil's overall assessment will count towards that assessment.

In the assessments, teachers will give great weight to learning developments and progress that the children and young people may have made with respect to the next school year. This is an area where the hard work and independence of children and adolescents can be acknowledged. Where there is some question as to the appropriate mark or pertaining to pupils' educational track, decisions should always be in favour of the pupils.

Will your daughter or your son be completing school this summer? If she or he has not yet found an apprenticeship, I am pleased to be able to inform you that the deadline for the conclusion of apprenticeship contracts has been extended to September 2020. So, don't give up! Keep helping your daughter or your son in their search for an appropriate apprenticeship. The teachers, career guidance and information centres (BIZ) and the school inspectorate (*Schulinspektorat*) will be happy to help you with this as well.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all, dear parents and guardians and dear pupils, for everything you've done in these past difficult weeks. So far, we have come to grips with this crisis together: the pupils, their families and the schools. We, as a society. My wish for you, and my hope for all our sakes, is that our daily lives will soon return to normal.

Wishing you and your family all the best,
Yours sincerely,

Die Bildungs- und Kulturdirektorin
Director for Education and Cultural Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Häslér', written in a cursive style.

Christine Häslér
Regierungsrätin
Member of the Executive Council