
 PRESS RELEASE 			
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FULL-SCALE RETURN TO SCHOOL BEGINS ON MAY 2

DEPUTY PM YOO ATTENDS SCHOOL SPORTS CONTEST IN CELEBRATION OF CHILDREN'S DAY

[KEY POINTS]

- ✓ Beginning on May 2 (Mon), 2022, all nationwide schools will resume in-person schooling, shifting from the previous guideline which mandated activities to be carried out only in small groups to the one that resumes activities to pre-pandemic levels as part of an effort to return to normalcy and to achieve educational recovery.
 - ✓ Mask mandates on physical education classes will be lifted for outdoor activities from May 2 (Mon), and be expanded on May 23 (Mon) to allow students to go to school field trips without having to wear a mask.
 - ✓ Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Yoo Eun-hae will attend a sports contest to be held at a school in Seoul to discuss ways to return to normalcy in education.
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- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Yoo Eun-hae will attend a sports contest to be held at Seoul Geumhwa Elementary School (Principal Eom Soo-kyung) on May 2, 2022, to mark the first day of full-scale, nation-wide return to in-person schooling and the Children's Day, a public holiday celebrated on May 5 every year.
 - For the past two years, the Ministry of Education and schools around the country have worked hard to expand in-person schooling in the face of the global outbreak of COVID-19 to safeguard students' right to education and health by introducing various measures such as readjustment of student density in the classroom and introduction of online education.

- Due to concerns over school infection, however, physical interaction between students has been restricted by dividing them into small groups or encouraging them to engage in activities individually. Meanwhile, wide-ranging experiential programs and extracurricular activities were technically put on hold for the last two years.
- Having said that, as the recent trends clearly indicate declining infection rates, the entire nation has been preparing to return to normalcy with provincial offices of education and schools thoroughly bracing for a full-scale in-person schooling by devising academic operation plans and revising relevant guidelines in alignment with the Plan for Return to Normalcy in School, a guideline released by the Ministry of Education on April 20, 2022.
- All schools will begin their in-person instruction on May 2 to fully reopen schools to pre-pandemic levels, and will be given autonomy to strictly control school infection.
- As a consequence, all schools will allow physical attendance of students and the undertaking of diverse educational activities, including student clubs and sports gatherings.
- It is noteworthy that, for the first time in two years, field trips will also resume to include overnight school trips to allow students to have more extensive educational experience.
- Moreover, in alignment with the Revised Plan for Outdoor Mask Mandate*, a plan announced by the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters, or CDSCHQ, on April 29, the Ministry of Education will also lift the outdoor mask mandate starting on May 2 to allow kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools to carry out their outdoor physical education classes and sports events without having to wear a mask.

* Starting on May 2, 2022, mask mandate will be lifted for outdoor activities with the exception of events that include the gathering of 50 people or more such as assemblies, concerts, and sports events.

- Once the new mandate is fully in implementation, it will be expanded further on May 23 to permit students to go on a school field trip without having to wear a mask.
 - However, if the head of a school decides to keep the mask mandate in place due to concerns over infection, their students may be required to keep their masks on during field trips or school trips.
- Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education will focus on supporting schools to thoroughly undertake concrete tasks outlined in the Comprehensive Plan for Educational Recovery.
- First, supplementary classes and remedial tutoring by college students will be offered to all willing students, even if their academic levels are already above average, and information on such programs will be made widely available to allow as many students to benefit from them as possible.
 - In addition, since the problem of learning loss can only be addressed when students themselves develop an inner drive to learn as well as psychological stability, all schools will be encouraged to run educational recovery programs to comprehensively assist students to more closely interact with their peers, to develop mental stability and to engage in physical activities.

Examples of School-wide Programs for Educational Recovery

- ▶ "Let's Hang Out, My Friends" : This program is implemented by an elementary school in Chungnam to provide psychological counseling for each class and run camps focusing on developing emotional skills. It also assists students who have difficulty adjusting to school life by referring them to professional mental health experts, as well as counseling to help them create a sense of intimacy with their peers.
- ▶ "Program to Support Recovery of Peer Relationship and Social Skills" : Implemented by a middle school in Daejeon, this program focuses on promoting interaction between students with the student council taking the lead based on student autonomy, and on restoring their social skills by participating in volunteering activities.
- ▶ "Play-Dent" : A middle school in Incheon operates this program to encourage students to engage in more physical activities of their own choosing, effectively contributing to the development of positive mentality and life values.
- ▶ ("Da-cheum" : By running this program, a high school in Gwangju promotes friendship among students, helps them develop psychological and emotional stability, and encourages them to partake in physical activities and better adjust to school life.

- After observing the sports contest at Seoul Geumhwa Elementary School, Deputy Prime Minister Yoo will meet up with various educational stakeholders to listen to their ideas about returning to normalcy and in-person schooling, including resuming sports activities, and will update them on informative policies.
- At the event, she will note that the return to in-person schooling will not only help students reclaim their right to education, but also allow them to enjoy renewed opportunities to reconnect with their peers emotionally. She will also highlight that our collective dedication and trust will help the return-to-normal measures come to fruition and take firm root in all schools around the country.