



Recommendations for
organization of teaching for
lower primary education
and Guidelines for
assessment and grading in
combined teaching model





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Recommendations for organization of teaching for lower primary education and Guidelines for assessment and grading in combined teaching model

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Introduction

In accordance with the Croatian Government Conclusion of 23 April 2020 it is planned to reopen the schools for lower primary education for specific groups of students in line with recommendation of Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH). Namely, with the economic recovery, it is expected that parents will not work from home anymore so in line with that it is necessary to re-establish specific functionalities of education system. To enable children and students go back to kindergartens and schools and therefore continue with their everyday education is also seen as another aspect of addressing the current situation. In addition, it is beneficial for students to go back to schools, if epidemiologically acceptable, as the teaching quality is much better organized in schools, and socialization is an important aspect of student education. The most important objective still is caring for the overall child's development and wellbeing.

CIPH published [Instructions for prevention and combating COVID-19 epidemics for early education institutions as well as primary education institutions where the possibility for providing care for pre-school children and students attending lower primary education is ensured](#) (further to be referred as CIPH Instructions). CIPH Instructions do not impose students and teachers should wear masks or gloves, but it is suggested that work is organized in small groups not bigger than 10 participants and away from other groups at school up to the maximum possible distance. Furthermore, the Instructions provide very detailed instructions regarding work and conditions which need to be ensured, so these Recommendations are coherent with the *Instructions*.

CIPH Instructions, as well as these Recommendations have been prepared for the first two weeks of schools reopening for lower primary education.

During the first two weeks of organizing classes at schools and providing care in kindergartens, the whole process will be monitored and evaluated from the pedagogic and epidemiological perspective upon which conditions will be modified if necessary. In line with the epidemiological situation, new guidelines will be prepared or the duration of the current ones will be extended. The established groups which will start on May 11 earliest cannot include additional child or student subsequently, and if applicable, teachers as well. Separating groups is key issue for ensuring student safety.

In line with CIPH *Instructions*, no more than 9 students can be in the classroom in the period of first two weeks. That means that in most classes in Croatia one part of students will attend classes at school and the other part from home.

Note: Croatia has 916 main lower primary education schools (out of which 116 are in City of Zagreb), and in addition to these, there are 1149 branch schools. Lower primary education schools include 9 903 classes. On average, there are 13,5 students per class, and 11 classes per school. Average school has three classes per student age. In the City of Zagreb there are 20 students per class on average.

Teaching organization in combined model

Combined teaching model is teaching implemented with application of ICT as well as live in the classroom, and all students are engaged in distance learning to a certain extent.

During epidemics, lower primary education will have teaching organized partially as teaching attended at school, however in different conditions compared to regular classes, and partially as distance learning. In line with *CIPH Instructions*, Parents can decide for their children to participate in distance learning exclusively.

Teaching in lower primary education in regular programme is implemented by class teachers, foreign language teachers, Religious Education teachers, and in some schools Informatics, Physical Education and Musical Culture teachers. Also, in primary schools there are around 2600 professional staff employed (pedagogists, psychologists, librarians, rehabilitators, social pedagogues, speech therapists, etc...) All mentioned employees should participate in combined teaching distance model.

Simultaneously with teaching implemented in schools, distance teaching will still continue primarily through TV program 'Škola na Trećem' supported by [work materials-assignments and activities available online on Škola za život webpage.](#)

In order to provide equal education for all students (those who attend schools and those who are home-based) and equal achievement of planned educational outcomes, synchronized work is necessary in schools and TV program 'Škola na Trećem'. Combined teaching model is based on achieving the same educational outcomes for students who attend schools and students who follow the School on TV. It is especially important that students acquire key linguistic, mathematical and science competences, as well as that they are equally assessed. An important precondition for that is publishing the list of teaching units and materials for the "Škola na Trećem" at least three days in advance.

Taking into account proportionality, subjects with predominantly nurturing component should be included as well. Exception is Physical Education, in line with CPIH Instructions, so it is not recommended indoors, but also intense outdoor activities should be avoided as well, specifically those which include close physical contact.

In the teaching process the following are the rules:

- Educational outcomes should be aligned when working in the classroom with the School on TV.
- Teaching methods and student activities may differ in combined teaching model for students in the classroom and students at home.
- Assignments for students should be similar taking into account time necessary for their fulfilment, complexity and correlation with educational outcomes.
- Homework, student work and assignments should be the same and students should have the possibility to send them to teachers either directly or via technologies or parents.
- Assessment methods should be uniformed for all students in the combined teaching model.

All students should have accessibility in teaching, teaching materials and learning support provided. Teachers should use [materials](#) published on [School on TV](#), selected handbooks and other educational resources.

Collection, review and assessment of student work and assignments should be regularly done by teachers, in a similar way and according to the same criteria for all students in a combined teaching model. However, that does not mean that every day each student should have their work reviewed

by the teacher, but it can be decided by the teacher when the students will submit their work and for which subjects.

Recommendations for teachers

The following are the rules for implementation of teaching process:

- 1 Educational outcomes should be aligned when working in the classroom with the School on TV.
- 2 Teaching methods and student activities may differ in combined teaching model for students in the classroom and students at home.
- 3 Assignments for students should be similar taking into account time necessary for their fulfilment, complexity and correlation with educational outcomes.
- 4 Homework, students' work and assignments should be the same and students should have the possibility to send them to teachers either directly or via technologies or parents.
- 5 Assessment methods should be uniformed for all students in the combined teaching model.

All students should have accessibility in teaching, teaching materials and learning support provided.

Preporuke učiteljima

U provođenju nastavnoga procesa treba se pridržavati sljedećih pravila:



1

Odgojno-obrazovni ishodi trebali bi biti usklađeni u radu u učionici s nastavom u Školi na Trećem.

2

Metode poučavanja i aktivnosti za učenike mogu se razlikovati u modelu mješovite nastave za učenike u učionici i one kod kuće.

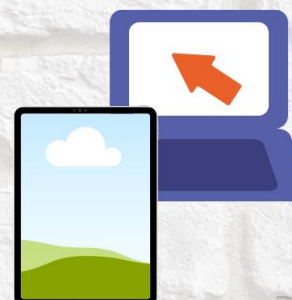


3

Zadaci koje učenici dobivaju trebaju biti slični s obzirom na vrijeme potrebno za izvođenje, zahtjevnost u izradi, povezanosti s odgojno-obrazovnim ishodima.

4

Domaće zadaće, uradci i zadaci trebaju biti jednaki i svi učenici ih moraju imati mogućnost predati učiteljima u izravnom kontaktu ili posredstvom roditelja i tehnologije.



5

5

Metode vrednovanja trebaju biti ujednačene za sve učenike u mješovitom modelu nastave.

Svim učenicima treba osigurati dostupnost poučavanja, nastavnih materijala i potpore u učenju.



Assignments collection, review and assessment should be conducted regularly and in a similar manner, using the same criteria for all students in combined teaching model.

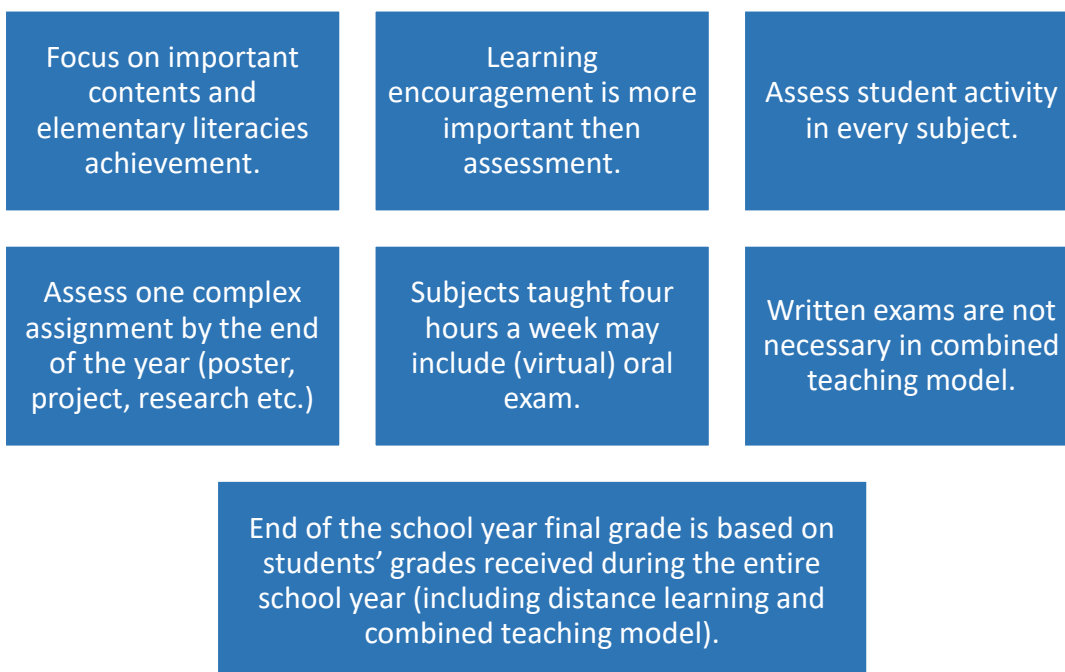
Guidelines for Assessment and Grading

Assessment in lower primary education combined teaching model and distance learning should include assessment as learning and assessment for learning (formative assessment), as well as feedback aimed at encouraging and motivating students to explore and learn. Grading itself is less important here.

Assessment in lower primary education combined teaching model and distance learning, should include assessment as learning and assessment for learning (formative assessment), as well as feedback aimed at encouraging and motivating students to explore and learn. The Grading is less important here.

Final grade at end of the school year is based on students' grades received during the entire school year, including distance learning or combined teaching model.

All recommendations from [*Instructions for assessment and grading in distance learning*](#) apply to combined teaching model as well. Summary is provided in the chart below:



Specifically, student's activity in discussions and homework can be assessed in almost all subjects. Activity can also be assessed by at least one grade from an appropriate subject area. Furthermore, one complex assignment such as poster, presentation, project, research work, critical overview or problem task can be given for almost every subject. Such work can be evaluated using rubrics or some other form clearly showing assessment elements and criteria. Thus, by the end of the school year, all students in combined teaching model can have at least two grades in almost all subjects, regardless of whether they take online classes or attend classes at school.

It is worth emphasizing that the contents that the teachers teach and afterwards evaluate, should be focused on important issues, not secondary details or facts.

Innovative assessment methods include projects, posters, problem solving, e-portfolio, simple research work, practical work, projects students conduct independently or in collaboration with other students etc. All these methods require teacher and peer support, as well as graduality in their fulfilment, followed by feedback provided to students at different levels of task completion.

According to [*Croatian Institute for Public Health Instructions \(CIPH\)*](#), teachers at school should spend as much time outdoors with children as possible. This means that some of the subjects (such as Science, Arts and Music) can be taught in schoolyards, gardens or parks, but without any contact with other classes or other people. Having Physical Education (PE) done in such a manner is not recommended, though.

Teachers Responsibilities in Combined teaching Model

According to the ordinance regulating primary school teaching and non-teaching staff weekly responsibilities, lower primary school teachers' weekly working hours include 16 hours of subject teaching, 1 hour of homeroom class, 1 hour of other activities with students, 1 hour of remedial classes, 1 hour of additional classes and 1 hour of extracurricular activities. That totals to 21 hours (each consisting of 45 minutes) of direct educational work with students.

However, according to the [CIPH Instructions](#) all activities should be conducted within one group, with one teacher and no physical contact. Therefore, no extracurricular activities will be carried out, while PE will be taught to a lesser extent. Remedial and additional classes *live* (in person) probably do not provide for equal participation opportunities. Furthermore, the weekly hour (45 min period) usually reserved for additional activities with students might also be difficult to implement at this phase. All of these hours can be a part of distance learning, providing teachers with the opportunity to dedicate 5-6 hours a week to communicating with parents and students in online classes (on average 1 hour daily).

Some of the activities specified by the school curriculum will not be implemented (e.g. short and long school trips, school manifestations), nor will some annual events (e.g. student competitions).

Other activities necessary to achieve a 40 hours' weekly workload include preparation and planning for direct instruction in combined teaching model, as well as student achievement assessment.

It is important to take care of the appropriate student workload, but also of teachers' abilities to perform their job within a 40-hours working week.

Non-teaching staff should provide support to teachers in their preparation for combined teaching model, especially in their work with SEN students.

Number of students in combined teaching model (before 16th May) remains the same.

According to [CIPH Instructions](#) one group of children is taken care of by one teacher, or by two in case of extended day programme, but with no overlap. That means that lower primary education students will not have classes for subjects that are not taught by their general class teacher (foreign language, optional and facultative subjects).

Organization of Classes in School

[CIPH Instructions](#) states the following:

- To ensure minimum movement and contact among children, classes will not be starting at the same time. For example, schools can organize intervals of 10 to 15 minutes for students to arrive, thus allowing 1st grade students to arrive between 8:00 and 8:20, if school has three first grades (grade A at 8:00; grade B at 8:20 and grade C at 8:20); 2nd grade students would start between 8:20 and 8:40, if there are three second grades etc. Since schools usually have more than one entrance students can use different entrances, thus complying with [CIPH Instructions](#) and students being in school by 9:00. This is just an example and every school should make an appropriate timetable. This timetable needs to be aligned with extended day programme, where such programme is offered, so that children can be cared for in a given timeframe.
- Classes will not have breaks at the same time but with certain delay, in line with their classes' starting time. During their short breaks students can remain in the classroom or go outside to schoolyard, while respecting the appropriate social distance from other classes.
- Lunch time break will also not be at the same time for all classes. It is recommended for food to be prepared for instant consumption and distributed to pupils in the classroom or, if possible, in a school's outdoor space.
- Extracurricular activities will not be carried out in schools.
- CIPH epidemiologists will hold a webinar for all teachers on CIPH Instructions.
- First day of school should start with instructions to students on how to conduct themselves, wash their hands, keep social distance etc.
- The same teacher will be working with the same class the entire time, if it is possible. That means that subjects taught by subject teachers will continue be taught online.
- PE is not recommended indoors, nor is intensive physical activity. Thus, PE teaching hours will be decreased. Nonetheless, simple 5-minute stretching exercises should be organised and carried out.
- Students, on average, spend three to four school hours at school, except those in extended day programme.
- It is not recommended for parents to enter the school area, thus parent-teacher meetings can be conducted via phone or video call.

Parents and school circle of trust for students' learning and benefit

Parents are required to carefully read [CIPH Instructions](#) to discern which students are not allowed to go to school and what categories of students are recommended not going to school at this stage. Principals and teachers should be in contact with students' parents and provide all the information necessary to timely define which students may attend classes in school in the first two weeks. In case of doubt, parents should contact the relevant family doctor, while schools can turn to relevant epidemiological services.

If the number of students applied for school attendance surpasses the allowed number of students in a class, and if there is no possibility of organizing a new class, the principal should set priorities to define which students will be attending school from starting from 11th May. Children whose parents/caretakers both work outside home and have no other possibility to take care of their children are prioritised.

Parents are an important link in the learning circle of trust, as well as in supporting in student's overall development, their adoption of values and upbringing in general. However, in distance learning and combined teaching model they have a special role, especially with children in lower primary education, because they need to closely cooperate with the school's teaching and non-teaching staff. However, while doing so, the parents cannot and must not take over the teacher's role.

Parents need to recognize that assessment does not use, as has been the case so far, content knowledge as the main knowledge indicator, but should look at other elements (independence, creativity, and ability to apply what has been learned, team work...) and count on teachers to take that into consideration as well. It is additionally emphasized that during this period all students should get a grade related to their activity in the fulfilment of their obligations, but also that it is expected from them to independently work on more complex assignments. It is useful if the parents are acquainted with these complex assignments, but they should not be involved in creating or writing them on student's behalf. A clear parent's attitude here is important for the children's development of values; both parents and teacher should insist on this.

Important for parents

- It is recommended that children with chronic diseases (respiratory, cardiovascular, diabetes, malignancies, immunodeficiency, and children with major physical/motor

impairment) be kept at home, as well as children whose parents/caretakers have one of these diseases.

- It is encouraged that all children, for whom care at home can be provided, stay at home, since the number of children in kindergartens and schools can be such that physical distance measures in these communities will not be respected.
- Parents/caretakers bring and take children to schools and kindergartens and, if possible, they do not enter the institution except in utmost need, but arrive at the entrance where they maintain a distance of at least 2 meters to other parents/caretakers and children.
- The student comes and leaves school with a school bag, if it is not possible to keep it in the school, and does not share his/her equipment and kit with other students.
- If it is possible to organize, the parent brings and takes away to the kindergarten marked backpack with clothes only on Fridays (last working day in the week) when he/she comes for the child.
- The parent/caretaker brings and takes away the child from the institution in such a way that the child is always accompanied by one adult person/parent/caretaker.
- Whenever possible, the child is accompanied by the same person or two persons are altered.
- Whenever possible, the child should be accompanied by the same adult living in the same household with the child and is the person who, in relation to other persons who could bring and take away the child, is involved in such daily activities that possibility of getting infected with COVID 19 is the least.
- Whenever possible, the child should be accompanied by the adult who due to elderly age (65 years and older) or chronic diseases does not belong to the risk group of COVID 19 infection.
- Whenever possible, the parents/caretakers bring their children to every educational group in previously agreed time, different for every group, with the interval of at least 10 minutes between two educational groups.
- The parents are not allowed to gather at the entrance.
- The parents/caretakers do not bring or take away children from the institutions, nor enter the outdoor space (schoolyard, garden, and playground) or indoor space of the institution if they have elevated body temperature, respiratory symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath or are at risk of being in contact with COVID 19 positive people or are suspected of being infected by COVID 19 or are in self isolation.
- The parent/caretaker confirms in a written statement to the head of the institution, prior to the inclusion of the child in the institution, that the child does not have any symptoms of the disease, that is not at risk and that it is a child with both working parents and that

the parent is familiar with the Croatian Institute of Public Health (CIPH) Instructions as a whole.



Recommendations for the parents

1. Check if the child is at risk according to the CIPH Instructions.
2. If possible, ensure that the child remains at home.
3. Read the CIPH Instructions.
4. Sign the statement and hand it over in the school.
5. Do not enter the school territory.
6. Follow the epidemiology instructions at home and when bringing the child to the school.

Students with disabilities who have the support of the teaching assistant

According to the Ordinance on elementary and secondary education of students with disabilities (OG 24/2015) there are seven groups of disabilities (vision impairments, hearing impairments, speech and specific learning disabilities, organs and organ systems conditions, intellectual disabilities, behaviour disorders and mental health conditions, difficulties in psychophysical development). The children who have previously been supported by the teaching assistants, their inclusion in the school with the support of their teaching assistants can be ensured, only if the parent/caretaker is by no means able to organise child's stay at home, with the exception of the children with diseases/health conditions stated in the CIPH Instructions. It is also recommended to consult the relevant school doctor on specific issues related to the health and education of the students in these circumstances. If a student with disabilities is sent to the class, teaching assistant is counted in the total number of persons in the educational group that should not exceed the total number recommended in these Instructions (up to 10 children and adults), and teaching assistant has to adhere to all of the stated in the CIPH Instructions.

If the student with disabilities is not sent to the class (because he is not in the lower primary education), the school is obligated to ensure the adequate space for the distance learning.

Expert assistants in the schools have to prepare work programme and assignments for teaching assistants who support students with disabilities.

Responsibilities of the school principal

Based on these Recommendations and CIPH Instructions, the principals are given the tasks in the entire process of opening the schools.

Before reopening of schools	During reopening of schools
Develop the Implementation plan for the process of reopening schools based on the Recommendations and CIPH Instructions.	Ensure the admission of students at school entrances according to the established schedule.
Hold virtual meetings with teachers and other employees to discuss the implementation plan and define obligations.	At the beginning of the class, provide education for students in a simple and appropriate way.
With founders' supports ensure material conditions (disinfectant, washing and maintenance equipment, according to the Instructions). Contact local civil protection headquarters to provide schools with disinfectant and cleaning equipment, if necessary.	Ensure regular hand washing and ensure regular procurement of disinfectants and cleaning equipment, with financial means provided by the founder and through local headquarters, if necessary.
Ensure the implementation of the Recommendations of the Ministry.	Train the students where can they go, how to use breaks, share food, go out to the schoolyard and playgrounds. Conduct the earthquake drills.
Oblige the expert assistants in schools to coordinate the activities with students with disabilities, as well as other students belonging to underrepresented and vulnerable groups.	Ensure that expert assistants are working with teachers and students, especially students with disabilities, teaching assistants, but also to perceive the need of other underrepresented and vulnerable groups.
Oblige the teachers and expert assistants to contact the parents to determine which students will attend school on May 11 th . The parent confirms in a written statement to the principal, prior to the inclusion of the child in the institution, that the child does not have any symptoms of the disease, that is not at risk and that it is a child with both working parents and	Ensure that cleaning staff ventilate and clean the space in the school.

that the parent is familiar with the CIPH Instructions as a whole.	
Ensure that all employees, especially teachers, receive proper instructions and training (webinar CIPH).	Establish that financial and material goods are ensured for work, learning and teaching.
Ensure administrative and technical support when reopening of schools.	Keep records on the measurement of the body temperature of employees (CIPH Instructions)
Send clear instructions to parents on daily routine (e.g. body temperature measurements every morning), bringing children to school and hygiene standards in schools.	Regularly collect data on the status and if needed, amend the Implementation plan.

In this process, the principals will have the support of the Ministry of Science and Education, founders, National and Local Civil Protection Headquarters. The Ministry will regularly publish answers to frequently asked questions.

Theoretical framework comparison

According to [*Framework for reopening schools*](#) (UNESCO, April, 2020.) in the case of reopening schools it is essential to take into account four aspects: security framework, way of learning and teaching, inclusion of marginalised groups and overall development of students. Taking it into consideration we have addressed every of the four aspects in the following way:

Security framework – [*CIPH Instructions*](#)

Learning and teaching – *These Recommendations and Instructions* as well as the instructions earlier published on the web pages www.mzo.hr i www.skolazazivot.hr .

Inclusion of marginalised groups– allowing return to schools of students with disabilities based on the parents' request, but also when returning, classroom teaching students who have no care at home are prioritised.

Overall development of students– additionally emphasised in every published Ministry's recommendations and instructions as well as answers to the frequently asked questions published on www.mzo.hr and www.skolazazivot.hr

Reference

[*Instructions for preventing and combating the COVID 19 epidemic for early education institutions and primary education institutions, where the possibility of providing the care for preschool children and students attending lower primary education is ensured*](#), Croatian Institute for Public Health, 30th April 2020.

[*Instructions for assessment and grading in distance learning*](#), Ministry of Science and Education, April 2020.

[*Ordinance on weekly work obligations of teachers and expert assistants in elementary school*](#), (OG 34/14, 40/14, 103/14 and 102/19)

[*Ordinance on elementary and secondary education of students with disabilities*](#) (OG 24/2015)

[*Framework for reopening schools*](#), UNICEF, UNESCO, World Food Programme and World Bank, April, 2020.