**Current information about use of face masks and coronavirus home tests for schools 22.2.2022**

At its meeting of 21.2.2022 the Regional Coronavirus Coordination Group of North Savo announced that the use of masks for under 12-year-olds will be abandoned in our region. In accordance with the instructions of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare the **use of masks is still recommended for persons aged 12 years and older**. The City of Kuopio, however, offers masks to all pupils - at least until the ski holiday.

According to the instructions masks should be worn in situations where it is difficult to avoid close contact and the risk of infection may be high. This recommendation applies to everyone, but those not protected by having received vaccinations, or by having already suffered from Covid-19 are particularly vulnerable to infection.

During this week, and particularly next week (weeks 8-9), schools will also be provided with home tests sent by the National Emergency Supply Agency, for the benefit of pupils and students. The test should be performed if a person displays symptoms indicative of coronavirus infection. The test is performed at home independently or under parental supervision in accordance with the instructions contained in the test kit. The school or educational institution does not offer guidance on the performance of the test, nor does it collect information on the test results. In the distribution of home tests the package size, at first, will be five tests per pupil. The test must be stored at a temperature above three degrees. Its shelf life is approx. one year.

Further information on the home tests distributed in schools: [https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases-and-vaccinations/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/symptoms-and-treatment-coronavirus/coronavirus-tests/home-testing-guidelines-for-schoolchildren-students-and-staff-of-schools-and-educational-institutions](https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset/ajankohtaista/ajankohtaista-koronaviruksesta-covid-19/oireet-ja-hoito-koronavirus/koronavirustestit/kotitestausohje-koululaisille-opiskelijoille-seka-koulujen-ja-oppilaitosten-henkilokunnalle)