

FAQs – COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS

If you have any questions about coronavirus please visit www.nhsinform.scot in the first instance, or call the helpline on 0800 028 2816.

Further information on measures to control local outbreaks can be found here:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/controlling-local-coronavirus-outbreaks>

Q When should a parent take a child for a test?

You should take your child for a test if they have any one of the three symptoms of COVID-19. The symptoms are:

- the onset of a persistent cough
- or a temperature/fever
- or a loss of taste or smell

Only people who are symptomatic should book a test unless you are asked to get a test by Public Health as part of the management of an outbreak in your community.

Q Can a child who has cold symptoms, for example, a runny nose, sneezing, still come to school?

A child who has any of the symptoms of COVID-19 (a persistent cough, or a temperature/fever, or a loss of taste or smell) should not come to school. The child and their household should self-isolate and arrange for a COVID-19 test.

A child who has cold symptoms but no symptoms of COVID-19 does not need to miss out on school if you feel their symptoms are mild and that they are well enough to attend. If they do not have the symptoms of COVID-19 they do not need to have a test.

Q When should a school ask parents to take their child home?

A school should be concerned that a child may have COVID-19 if they have a new continuous cough, or a fever/temperature, or report that they have a loss of taste or smell. If they have any of these symptoms parents should be asked to take their child home. If the child has other symptoms and is well enough to stay in school parents do not need to take their child home.

Q If a pupil/ teacher has a negative test can they return to work/ school if their cough/ symptoms persist?

If the pupil/teacher is off with COVID-19 symptoms but they get a negative test result they can return to school when they feel well enough. They should be at least 48 hours clear of fever before returning to school.

Q What would define a continuous cough?

A continuous cough is coughing for longer than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. For people who usually have a cough, it may be worse than normal. A continuous cough will not be a single coughing fit.

Q Should schools remain open when pupils are testing positive?

It is important to note that there is currently no evidence to suggest that there is widespread transmission in schools. There is evidence that mixing socially in the community, particularly around social gatherings in houses without maintaining physical distancing measures, can transmit the virus and is a factor in some of the investigations being carried out by NHS Lanarkshire.

There is no need to panic. As long as pupils adhere to the guidance and follow the signage around schools, and wear a face covering if appropriate, it will help to minimise transmission.

Q What if my child develops symptoms while at school?

Your child will be isolated in a room and next of kin will be contacted and asked to pick them up from school. The school will do everything to minimise contact with any other people.

Q Why is the school keeping certain pupils off and not all?

When an individual tests positive, the Test and Protect team identifies contact with other people and then Public Health assesses the risk. This assessment is based on each individual case and takes into consideration its unique circumstances before providing guidance. The Test and Protect team identify close contacts during the infectious period and will be in touch with those people to provide appropriate advice. This will include those who have been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes, or for a shorter time within 1 metre. The number of people who are asked to self-isolate as a precaution will be different each time. This process is not done by the council.

In current investigations, NHS Lanarkshire has assessed the risk to the wider school communities as being low.

More information on Test and Protect can be found [here](#).

Q Can schools ask to see a negative test result before children are allowed back in school?

Children should only be tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have been asked to get tested by Test & Protect. In these circumstances schools may wish to see the negative result and could agree this with parents. Schools cannot insist on this. We would request that schools do not contact Public Health or other health services to do this.

Q. What does it mean when it says that NHS Lanarkshire is carrying out contact tracing at my child's school?

Contact tracing is a process for identifying people who are at risk of coronavirus infection because they've had enough contact with a person who has tested positive. This process is carried out by NHS Lanarkshire's Test and Protect team. These people will be given advice to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Contact tracing is a well-established public health intervention. Health protection teams have a lot of experience delivering contact tracing for a range of infectious diseases.

- Please remember also that if your child is interviewed by Test and Protect, it is important that as much information as possible is given to help protect other people.
- If Test and Protect inform your child that they are a close contact, they should continue to self-isolate for 14 days, **even if they receive a negative test result**. They should not return to school even if they get a negative result from a test.

Q. My child has been told to self-isolate as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, but does that mean everyone in the household too?

Following new guidance from the Scottish Government, household members living with a person who is a close contact of a case and who themselves have not been identified as a close contact by Test and Protect, no longer need to self-isolate. The guidance applies to all new cases from 30 September 2020. The exception are those who are assessed as presenting a risk through living in shared accommodation or dwellings of multiple occupancy.

Q. What about household members of a confirmed Covid-19 case?

They are still required to self-isolate for 14 days. They will be advised by Test and Protect or by letter of their final day of self-isolation.

Q If several members of a household have been tested for COVID-19 and only one result has come back and is negative, can that person return to their work/ school or do they have to wait for negative test results for all members of the household/ bubble.

Only household members who are symptomatic need to get tested. If more than one household member has symptoms all the results need to be back before a household member can return to school/work.

Q. What happens if my child begins to show symptoms this week?

Arrange for a test in the normal way by visiting www.nhsinform.scot in the first instance, or calling the helpline on 0800 028 2816. You can book a test for your child, yourself or someone you care for. All members of the household must isolate until the result of the test is known.

Q. How long might my child be off school for if they've been told to self-isolate (as a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case)?

All children should self-isolate for 14 days from the last date they had contact with the person who has tested positive.

Q If a teacher works across several classes (ie NCCT teacher, School Management team) would all classes she/he has been in contact with have to isolate if that teacher tests positive?

If a teacher tests positive, all close contacts will be identified. If they have worked across several classes when they may have been infectious all staff or pupils that the teacher was in close contact with would be identified as a precaution. This would not necessarily be a full class. It would include those pupils who had been within 2 metres of the teacher for more than 15 minutes, or within 1 metre for a shorter length of time.

Q If young people are wearing a face covering and they are next to someone who then tests positive does this mean they don't have to self-isolate?

No. Face masks and cloth face coverings available to the general public reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19, but they do not prevent it completely. The young person will still be required to isolate as a precaution if they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive.

Q How do I self-isolate my child?

We understand that this will be challenging but look at this advice on NHS Inform [here](#).

Q My child has cold symptoms, should I book a test for coronavirus?

No. You should only book a test for coronavirus if your child is displaying at least one of the symptoms - a new and continuous cough, fever, or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

Q What about my child's learning while they are off school?

Your child's head teacher, class teacher or another teacher will communicate your child's classwork via the school's normal digital access process such as GLOW, email or Teams, for the duration of the time your child is not at school.

Parents/carers will receive as a minimum a weekly phone call check in from a staff member from school. You will also receive a letter home (by email where possible) advising what work your child should be doing while they are self-isolating. This will likely be digital work, and the school can assist with digital devices if families do not have access to them.

Additionally, extended supports will be signposted, such as help with food deliveries for families who are isolating.

Q My child is very anxious about people getting coronavirus at school, or being asked to self-isolate. What help is there?

It's understandable that children and young people are frightened or anxious about coronavirus and we should all be playing a part to minimise the risk to anyone. This also includes pupils who may be feeling anxious or who are experiencing any bullying on social media. They – or you – should contact the available pupil support staff at the school. Often, pupils may just want to speak to a teacher that they trust, but if any pupil would like telephone counselling, this can be arranged through the school.

If you would prefer, information is also available via the national helpline on 0800 111 4000 (Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Q What measures are in place at school to prevent pupils from getting coronavirus?

Please take on board the advice below for both in school and when leaving the school premises.

- Sanitisation stations are available and all pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds during breaks, after meals, after using the toilet and at other points during the day.
- It is important that pupils practice good hand and respiratory hygiene. This means frequent handwashing and covering your mouth and nose with a tissue if coughing or sneezing.
- Face coverings should (unless exemptions apply) now be used where adults and young people in secondary schools (including ASN schools) are moving about the school in corridors and in confined communal areas (including toilets), where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain. Adults and children and young people aged 5 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport should also wear a face mask or covering.
- Try to make sure you keep a physical distance from your fellow pupils and staff when moving between classes and at breaks, where possible.

- There is a 'keep left' policy on stairs and corridors and one-way systems in place to minimise movement around the school.
- You don't need to wear a face covering all the time, although you can if you'd prefer to.
- You can bring in school bags, pencil cases and lunch boxes but please don't share things with other pupils.
- You will be asked to keep in your year groups when in class and please keep to this as much as possible at lunchtime and breaks.
- Follow the signage in place at school.

When leaving school at lunchtime or when school has finished, it is important that you continue to adhere to government advice around physical distancing. This includes:

- If queuing to purchase lunchtime snacks from a shop or food van, you must adhere to at least two metre physical distancing, even when you are in the open air. Understandably, you will be hungry and there will be many young people queuing but you must be two metres away from other people in queues. Police Scotland can enforce this legislation and would encourage you to act responsibly and protect your own and other people's safety by maintaining physical distancing.
- When going into a shop, takeaway or supermarket for food at lunchtime, you are required to be at least one metre apart and wear a face covering.