

COVID-19 related absence from school or childcare: a guide for parents and carers

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with COVID-19 have at least 1 of these symptoms.

If your child has any of the main symptoms of COVID-19

- Keep your child at home.
- Arrange a test online (search NHS COVID-19 testing) or by calling 119 as soon as possible.
- Anyone your child lives with, and anyone in your support bubble, must also stay at home. When you get your test result you will be advised what to do next.

If you or your child are worried about COVID-19, speak to your health visitor or school nurse

Health Visiting Team: 030 0304 5076

School Nursing Team: 030 3330 9974

What to do if...	Action needed	Return to school/setting when...
...my child has one or more of the main COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household including siblings → Arrange a PCR test for anyone in the household with symptoms → Inform school/setting about test result 	<p>...the test comes back negative</p> <p>If you are unable to get a test for your child within 5 days of them developing symptoms, or you choose not to arrange a test, you must follow the advice below.</p>
...my child has a runny nose, sore throat, headache, sickness or diarrhoea but doesn't have any of the main COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Contact school or setting to inform us if your child won't be attending → Ring on each day of illness 	<p>... they feel well enough to do so, and after 48 hours following the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea</p>
...my child tests positive for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household including siblings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For anyone with symptoms: this is for at least 10 days from when they started with symptoms - For anyone who doesn't develop symptoms: this is for at least 10 days from when the first person started with symptoms 	<p>...10 days have passed since symptoms began, and the child feels well and does not have a temperature. The child can return even if they still have a cough or loss/change to their sense of taste or smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks</p> <p>Remember, others in your household may still be self-isolating</p>
... I am unable to get a test for my child within 5 days of them developing symptoms of COVID-19, or I choose not to arrange a test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household including siblings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For anyone with symptoms: this is for at least 10 days from when they started with symptoms - For anyone who doesn't develop symptoms: this is at least 10 days from when the first person started with symptoms 	<p>...10 days have passed since the symptoms began, and the child feels well and does not have a temperature. The child can return even if they still have a cough or loss/change to their sense of taste or smell as these symptoms can last for several weeks</p> <p>Remember, others in your household may still be self-isolating</p> <p>If the child is a contact of a confirmed case, they must continue to self-isolate for the full 10 days</p>
...my child tests negative for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Contact school/setting to inform us → Discuss with us when your child can come back 	<p>...they feel well enough to do so, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Anyone else in the household has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 10 days → Anyone else in the household has symptoms and hasn't received a negative test result → They are a contact of a confirmed case → They have returned from abroad are required to quarantine (as per current Government advice)
...someone in my household (other than my child) has COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household → Arrange a test for anyone in the household with symptoms → Inform school/setting about test result 	<p>...the test comes back negative or if no test taken, 10 days have passed since the person started with symptoms</p>

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What to do if...	Action needed	Return to school/setting when...
...someone in my household (other than my child) tests positive for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For anyone with symptoms: this is for at least 10 days from when they started with symptoms - For anyone who doesn't develop symptoms: this is at least 10 days from when the first person started with symptoms 	<p>... 10 days have passed since the person developed symptoms (or since the date of their test if they did not have symptoms).</p> <p>If your child develops symptoms during this time, you should arrange a PCR test. If they test positive or are not tested, they must stay at home for 10 days from when they started with symptoms</p>
... I am unable to get a test for someone in my household (other than my child) within 5 days of them developing symptoms COVID-19 symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → Self-isolate the whole household including siblings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For anyone with symptoms: this is for at least 10 days from when they started with symptoms - For anyone who doesn't develop symptoms: this is at least 14 days from when the first person started with symptoms 	<p>... 10 days have passed since the person developed symptoms</p> <p>If your child develops symptoms during this time, you should arrange a PCR test. If they test positive or are not tested they must stay at home for 10 days from when they started with symptoms</p>
...Someone in my household had a test for COVID-19 but the result was inconclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to self-isolate the whole household → Arrange a retest if possible within 5 days from the person starting with symptoms. → If you are unable to arrange a retest, follow advise above for "I am unable to get a test" 	<p>... 10 days have passed since the person developed symptoms, if unable to get a retest.</p> <p>...if able to get a retest, see advise boxes on what to do if someone tests positive or negative for COVID-19.</p>
... my child has been identified as a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Do not come to school/setting → Contact school/setting to inform us → If the contact was within school/setting, you will receive a notification letter from us → Do not arrange a test unless your child develops symptoms → Siblings can continue to attend 	<p>... 10 days have passed since the person developed symptoms (or since the date of their test if they did not have symptoms).</p> <p>If your child develops symptoms during this time, you should arrange a PCR test. If they test positive or are not tested, they must stay at home for 10 days from when they started with symptoms</p>
... someone else in my household has been identified as a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The household member must self-isolate for 14 days → The person should not arrange a test unless they develop symptoms → Child can continue to attend school 	... child can continue to attend
... I've heard that someone at school has tested positive for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → If your child is identified as a contact, you will be notified and advised what happens next 	... child can continue to attend
... My child has travelled abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → If your child is required to quarantine (as per current Government advice), contact school/setting to inform us → If your child is not required to quarantine, they can return to school/setting → You should not arrange a test for COVID-19 unless your child develops symptoms 	... your child has completed quarantine, if required
... I have received medical advice that my child must shield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not come to school/setting Contact school/setting to inform us 	...you are informed that restrictions are lifted, and shielding is paused again
... someone in my household has symptoms of COVID-19 but a lateral flow test (LFT) they use for work is negative	You must arrange PCR testing in the usual way. LFT should not be used to rule out COVID-19 in someone who has symptoms or who has been in contact with a positive case	... the PCR test comes back negative or 10 days have passed since the person started with symptoms