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Dear Parents and Carers,

This year continues to be very challenging for families and for schools. COVID-19 has meant disruption to pupil's education and significant changes to how schools are run.

As the virus has spread around the county many schools have had to take action because of confirmed COVID-19 infections among staff or pupils. Sometimes this has required whole schools to close for a period, but more commonly small groups or 'bubbles' have been required to self-isolate at home.

Schools take advice from the county council's Public Health team about what to do when there are cases confirmed at school. What is clear is that no two situations are the same; the specific circumstances in each school are always different.

This is why the action that schools are advised to take is not always the same.

It is important that parents and carers understand this and follow the instructions given by schools that are specific to their circumstances. By doing so everyone can help prevent infection spreading further and causing more disruption.

It is particularly important that everyone follows the guidance around what to do if someone in the family has symptoms of COVID-19 or tests positive. On the following pages is an easy to follow summary of what you must do in different situations.

Schools are working incredibly hard in difficult circumstances and the support of parents and carers is vital to help keep schools open and people safe.

Yours sincerely



Dan Barton  
Assistant Director – Education & Skills



Colin Cox  
Director of Public Health

# COVID-19 (coronavirus) absence: A quick guide for parents / carers

What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p><b>...my child has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child should get a test</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child's test comes back negative</b></p>
 <p><b>...my child tests positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child self-isolates for at least 10 days from when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms)</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child feels better, and has been without a fever for at least 48 hours</b></p> <p>They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell / taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.</p>
 <p><b>...somebody in my household has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Household member with symptoms should get a test</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result</li> <li>• Inform school immediately about test results</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when household member test is negative, and child does not have COVID-19 symptoms*</b></p>
 <p><b>...somebody in my household has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) - <i>even if someone tests negative during those 14 days</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>...when child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during the 14 days</b></p>

\* Most people with coronavirus have at least 1 of these symptoms:

- a high temperature (37.8°C or above. If you don't have a thermometer, feeling hot to the touch on your chest or back is a good indicator of a high 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

What to do if...	Action needed	Back to school...
 <p><b>...NHS Test and Trace has identified my child as a 'close contact' of somebody with symptoms* or confirmed COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Child self-isolates for 14 days (as advised by NHS Test and Trace) – even if they test negative during those 14 days</li> <li>• Rest of household does not need to self-isolate, unless they are a 'close contact' too</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during those 14 days</b></p>
 <p><b>...we / my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not take unauthorised leave in term time</li> <li>• Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel</li> <li>• Provide information to school as per attendance policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Whole household self-isolates for 14 days – even if they test negative during those 14 days</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed for the child, even if they test negative during those 14 days</b></p>
 <p><b>...we have received advice from a medical / official source that my child must resume shielding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child shouldn't attend school</li> <li>• Contact school as advised by attendance officer / pastoral team</li> <li>• Child should shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when school / other agencies inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again</b></p>
 <p><b>...I am not sure who should get a test for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only people with symptoms* need to get a test</li> <li>• People without symptoms are not advised to get a test, even if they are a 'close contact' of someone who tests positive</li> </ul>	<p><b>...when conditions above, as matching your situation, are met</b></p>

**For further information:**  
[gov.uk/backtoschool](https://www.gov.uk/backtoschool)