



Covid-19 Information for Parents

As your child returns to school, I wanted to clarify some key messages to ensure parents and carers are fully informed about the wider opening of school.

This information has been collated from national guidance and includes Tameside specific information. The DfE has set out in various guidance documents what schools should do in the event that a pupil or an employee becomes unwell/shows symptoms of coronavirus or tests positive for coronavirus. The information below brings the various pieces of guidance together. The extracts outline a number of scenarios that schools and settings may have to deal with as they extend their offer to more children and young people.

Key Messages

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- new continuous cough and/or
- fever (temperature of 37.8°C or higher)
- Loss of or change in, normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)
- Children may also display gastrointestinal symptoms.

What is the mode of transmission?

COVID-19 is passed from person to person mainly by large respiratory droplets and direct contact (close unprotected contact, usually less than one metre). These droplets can be directly inhaled by the person or can land on surfaces which another person may touch which can lead to infection if they then touch their nose, mouth or eyes.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period (i.e. time between exposure to the virus and developing symptoms) is between 1 and 14 days (median 5 days).

When is a person infectious?

A person is thought to be infectious 48 hours before symptoms appear, and up to seven days after they start displaying symptoms.

Are children at risk of infection?

Children of all ages can catch the infection, but children make up a very small proportion of COVID-19 cases with about 1% of confirmed cases in England aged under 19 years. Children also have a much lower risk of developing symptoms or severe disease.

Can children pass on the infection?

There is some uncertainty about how much asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic children can transmit the disease but the evidence so far from a number of studies suggests children are less likely to pass it on and do not appear to play a major role in transmission. Most children with COVID-19 have caught the infection from adults and not the reverse. This is unlike 'flu.

Why is PPE not recommended for teachers and children?

Transmission of Covid-19 is usually through droplets; the mainstay of control measures is minimising contact and thorough hand and respiratory hygiene. When these measures are maintained, and symptomatic persons are excluded, the risk is minimal.

What will happen if anyone develops symptoms or a household member develops symptoms?

Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19, or whose household member develops symptoms, should immediately self-isolate. They should not attend school and should follow the steps below.

- Parent/Carer or staff member should notify the school of their absence by phone.
- School should record and keep minimum dataset (Reason for absence, date of onset of symptoms, symptoms, class etc).
- See [Stay at home guidance](#) for isolation advice for child/staff member and their households. The person with symptoms should isolate for 10 days starting from the first day of their symptoms and the rest of their household for 14 days.
- School will advise that the child/staff member should get tested via [NHS UK](#) or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access. This would also apply to any parent or household member who develops symptoms.

What will happen if someone becomes unwell at an educational or childcare setting?

If anyone in an education or childcare setting becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home](#) guidance:

- If you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, OR you have received a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test result, the clear medical advice is to immediately self-isolate at home for at least 10 days from when your symptoms started. Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. You should arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19 - go to [testing](#) to arrange.
- Consider alerting the people that you have had close contact with in the last 48 hours to let them know you have symptoms of coronavirus COVID-19.
- Following a positive test result, you will receive a request by text, email or phone to log into the NHS Test and Trace service website and provide information about recent close contacts.
- After 10 days, or longer, if you still have symptoms **other** than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste, you must continue to self-isolate until you feel better.
- You do not need to self-isolate if you **only** have a cough or loss of sense of smell/taste after 10 days, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- If you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), then you must stay at home for at least 10 days. All other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the household became ill.
- Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection that people in your household could pass on to others in the community.
- If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they must stay at home for at least 10 days from when their symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in their original 14-day isolation period. If you have symptoms, you should stay as far away from other members of your household as possible. It is especially important to stay away from anyone who is clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable with whom you continue to share a household.
- Reduce the spread of infection in your home by washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 10 days, then use the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus (COVID-19) service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- If you develop new coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms at any point after ending your first period of isolation (self or household) then you must follow the same guidance on self-isolation again.

How do we consider other children/staff in the assigned group where someone has become unwell?

- If a child has become unwell (see below for action required for symptomatic child), at this stage, children in the assigned group can remain on school premises and remain within their assigned group where possible. A letter will be sent to the parents of other children within the assigned group.
- If a staff member has become unwell, arrangements should be made to replace the staff member to cover the assigned group. A letter will be sent to the employee and the parents of the children within the assigned group.
- All staff and students who are attending an education or childcare setting will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.
- Child/staff member should get tested via NHS UK or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access. This would also apply to any parent or household member who develops symptoms.

What will happen in the event of a symptomatic child awaiting collection in school?

School will follow the DfE guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

- If a symptomatic child is awaiting collection, they should be moved if possible, to the Hive where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required.
- The windows will be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, we will move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they will use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). Please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care>
- The school will record and keep the details of the incident in case it is needed in the future.
- In an emergency, we will call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.
- If a member of staff has helped someone with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available). If the member of staff comes into close proximity of someone with symptoms, and that person subsequently tests positive, they would not be considered a 'close contact' or need to self-isolate as long as they wore appropriate PPE while in contact with that person. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell.
- School will ensure that cleaners clean the area after someone with **suspected coronavirus** (COVID-19) has left. Cleaning the area with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

What happens if there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in an education or childcare setting?

- Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or assigned group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days.
- The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.

- See guidance for Contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus who do not live with the person.
- A letter should be prepared and sent to make the relevant people aware of next steps if any.

Test and Trace

- If a child who attends or staff member who works at an educational setting tests positive for COVID-19 then the school will be contacted by a contact tracer. This contact tracer may be based either in the Local Authority or the local Health Protection Team.
- The headteacher or appropriate member of the leadership team at the educational setting will be asked to work with the contact tracer to identify direct and close contacts of the case during the 48 hours prior to the child or staff member falling ill. This is likely to be the classmates and teacher of that class. The social distancing measures put in place by educational settings outside the classroom should reduce the number of other direct/close contacts.

Direct contact without PPE:

- being coughed on, or
- having a face-to-face conversation within 1 metre, or
- having unprotected skin-to-skin physical contact, or
- travel in a small vehicle with the case, or
- any contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer without face-to-face contact

Close contact without PPE:

- Extended close contact (between 1 and 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with a case
- All direct and close contacts will be excluded from school and advised to self-isolate for 14 days starting from the day they were last in contact with the case. For example, if the case tests positive on Thursday and was last in school on the previous Monday the first day of the 14 day period is on the Monday. Household members of contacts do not need to self-isolate unless the contact develops symptoms.
- The contact tracer can provide a standard letter to the school containing the advice for contacts and their families; the school will be asked to send the letter to the identified contacts.
- Contacts will not be tested unless they develop symptoms (contact tracer may provide advice on this). If a contact should develop symptoms, then the parent/carer should arrange for the child to be tested via [NHS UK](#) or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if they do not have internet access. This would also apply to any parent or household member who develops symptoms. If any staff contact develops symptoms then they can apply for a test via <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>
- As part of the national test and trace programme, if other cases are detected within the cohort or in the wider setting, Public Health England's local health protection teams will conduct a rapid investigation and will advise schools and other settings on the most appropriate action to take.
- Where settings are observing guidance on infection prevention and control, which will reduce risk of transmission, closure of the whole setting will not generally be necessary.

What happens when a child, young person or staff member tests negative?

When the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to their setting providing they have been well and fever free for 48 hours and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

If there are more confirmed cases linked to the school the local Health Protection Team will investigate and will advise the school on any other actions that may be required.

Finally, when giving first aid, where a first aider is in close contact with a child, and it is not possible to maintain a 2 metre or more distance away the use of PPE is recommended.