

Coronavirus and Schools

As the government has stated that it is imperative to reduce disruption to education whilst managing the risks caused by the coronavirus, this is a summary of the main points for schools, children and parents/carers.

Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (Covid-19) risks

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments. Guidance on emergency planning and response in education and other childcare settings can be found **here**.

There is also general government guidance issued to the population which schools should also give consideration to. This guidance on living safely with respiratory infections, including Covid-19, can be found **here**.

This guidance recommends:

- Ensuring good respiratory and hand hygiene for everyone
- Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

Response to any infection

There is no longer a legal requirement for those with Covid-19 or their close contacts to self-isolate. However, schools can refuse to allow a pupil or other person to attend the setting if they have an infectious disease in order to protect others. Full guidance on health protection in education and other childcare settings can be found **here**.

Attendance

From the start of the autumn term pupil attendance at school is compulsory and the usual pre-pandemic rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 should follow the latest government guidance about when they should stay at home.

When children and young people with symptoms should stay at home and when they can return to education

[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough to attend.

All children and young people with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

Children and young people aged 18 years and under who have a positive test result

It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.

If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can. After 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature, the risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower. This is because children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults.

Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.

Where a pupil is not attending because they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive test, schools should record this using Code I (illness) unless another more appropriate code applies.

Further guidance about the use of codes is provided here [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Coram Children's Legal Centre provides a helpful summary of other covid-related guidance for education settings [Coronavirus and Schools - childlawadvice.org.uk](#)