



Respiratory Outbreaks

This action card aims to explain the key actions for managing cases and outbreaks of respiratory infections in an education or childcare setting, in line with published guidance: [Health protection in education and childcare settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-protection-in-education-and-childcare-settings)

Please contact your local [Health Protection Team](#) if:

- You are a SEND or other setting with children who have health conditions and there are laboratory confirmed influenza cases
- you are a mainstream or SEND school and have any pupils who are seriously unwell in hospital or any deaths from a respiratory illness.

Transmission Route

Person to person spread through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated when people with the infection cough or sneeze or touch them. The risk of spread is greatest when people are close to each other, especially in poorly ventilated indoor spaces.

Exclusion

Guidance (including translations) for children in educational settings included in [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)

- Children and young people who are unwell and have a [high temperature](#) should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to an education or childcare setting when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough.
- 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 where possible avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.
- Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days.
- Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has COVID-19 or another respiratory illness such as flu should continue to attend as normal unless they become unwell.
- Children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.

Closures

It is not necessary to close the school unless there are operational reasons such as significant staff absence. This would be a decision for the school in conjunction with the relevant educational authority.

Recommended actions for limiting transmission

Hand and respiratory hygiene

- Children should be supervised and/or encouraged to wash their hand regularly
- Hand washing with liquid soap and warm water preferred over alcohol gel
- Paper towels or hand dryers should be used for drying hands (and a wastepaper bin provided for disposal of towels if applicable)
- Encourage good respiratory hygiene (using and disposing of tissues)
- [e-Bug | England Home](#) has a range of educational resources for ages 3-16 to learn about microbes, infection prevention and control, antibiotics and vaccination.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Regular cleaning using standard cleaning products such as detergents and bleach is an important part of reducing transmission
- Frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, light switches and work surfaces should be wiped down twice a day and one of these should be at the beginning or the end of the working day
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces is particularly important in bathrooms and kitchens.

Ventilation and use of outdoor space

- Consider use of outdoor spaces if possible
- Ensure occupied spaces are well ventilated and let fresh air in. Further information: [COVID-19: ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of coronavirus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus)

Communications

In the event of an outbreak, consider communications to raise awareness among parents and guardians and reinforce key messages, including the use of hand and respiratory hygiene measures.

Template letter for sending to parents when there are cases of respiratory illness or COVID-19 in the setting

There is no requirement to send this letter, but some settings may choose to do so if there are multiple cases, concerns from parents, or if there are children in the setting with underlying health conditions.

Setting to please amend/delete highlighted sections as appropriate

Date: DD/MM/YY

Dear Parents/guardians,

We are writing to inform you that the nursery/school/college has an outbreak/multiple cases [delete as appropriate] of respiratory illness/COVID-19/ [delete as appropriate] in XXX year/group/setting.

The nursery/school/college remains open, and your child should continue to attend as normal if they remain well.

What to do if your child develops respiratory symptoms, a high temperature or tests positive for COVID-19

The guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>

This includes advice for children and young people attending education and childcare settings. The key points are:

- Children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.
- Children and young people who are unwell and have a [high temperature](#) should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to education or childcare setting when they no longer have a high temperature, and they are well enough.
- If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and, where possible, avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test. The risk of passing the infection on to others is much lower after 3 days if they feel well and do not have a high temperature.
- Adults with a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days.
- Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has COVID-19 or another respiratory illness such as flu should continue to attend as normal unless they become unwell.

How to stop respiratory illness spreading (including COVID-19 and flu)

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with catching and spreading a respiratory illness:

- Take up vaccinations when you are offered – the annual flu vaccination is part of the routine vaccine schedule for eligible groups. To check if you/your child is eligible visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/> or speak to your GP
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of the arm (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Meet people outside and avoid crowded areas

- Open doors and windows to let in fresh air if meeting people inside
- Wear a face covering when it is hard to stay away from other people – particularly indoors or in crowded places.

Treatment

If your child has a long-term medical condition, such as a neurological condition, learning disability, kidney/liver/spleen condition, congenital heart disease or severe asthma, and develops symptoms of COVID-19 or flu, you should seek advice from your GP or call NHS 111. You will then be advised whether your child should be tested and whether they may benefit from antiviral medicine.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/ The manager