

**What to do if my child is unwell?**

At this time of the year children will pick up lots of colds as they return to school, especially this year after such a long break. We understand that this is a very worrying time for parents and staff making a call on whether a child should be in school. We really appreciate how vigilant you are all being. It is absolutely essential that we all follow government advice in order to keep our school community free from the spread of Covid-19. The latest guidance from the Department of Education is as follows. This may help us all with our decision making:

Symptoms and Testing

In recent days the Public Health Agency has seen a significant increase in individuals requesting a COVID-19 test where they do not have COVID-19 symptoms.

Testing is only available for individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been advised by the Public Health Agency Contact Tracing Service to have a test.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

* 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); or

* A high temperature/fever – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature); or

* A loss of or change in sense of smell or taste.

If an individual does not have these specific symptoms, they do not require a test.  Schools should not ask pupils or staff to book a COVID-19 test unless they have one or more of the symptoms above.

At this time of year, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate.  In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education.  In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

If a pupil or staff member does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate.  The individual can attend school if fit to do so.

Additionally, where a pupil displays gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.  In these instances, they should follow the school’s usual attendance policy in respect of these symptoms.