



Re: Covid-19 – changes in contact tracing for close contacts at school

24th September 2021

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

I want to thank all parents to date for acting cautiously in terms of close contacts, isolation and acting quickly if their child has symptoms of Covid-19 by keeping them at home and seeking medical advice. This approach has served us well throughout the pandemic. In line with recommendations from NPHE, it has been agreed that from 27th September 2021, automatic contact tracing of **asymptomatic (no symptoms)** close contacts within educational settings is no longer required. Please see below for some FAQ's that you may have.

Q. My child has been identified as a close contact AT SCHOOL but is asymptomatic - what should I do?

Children aged between 3 months and 13 years who are identified as a close contact at school and who are **asymptomatic**, will no longer be routinely required to restrict their movements and go for an automatic Covid-19 test. **They can attend school if no symptoms are present.**

Q. My child has been identified as a close contact OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL but is asymptomatic - what should I do?

Children aged between 3 months and 13 years who are identified as *household close contacts, and are not fully vaccinated or who have not had a confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis in the last 9 months (even if they have no symptoms) will still need to restrict their movements and get a Covid-19 test. **They cannot attend school and should follow current public health advice.**

**A child is a household contact if they were present over-night, in the house or in close contact in a residential setting of a Covid-19 case while the case was infectious. This may be in their own home or someone else's home for example children who may have been on sleepovers with family or friends.*

Q. My child is symptomatic of Covid-19 - what should I do?

Public Health advice remains the same for any child between 3 months and 13 years of age with **symptoms consistent with Covid-19, they should immediately self-isolate. They cannot attend school or socialise and should follow current public health advice.**

If you have any symptoms of Covid-19, self-isolate and contact your GP for further advice and/or get a Covid-19 test

***Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the [HSE Website is advised.](#)*

**** Symptoms of Covid-19:**

- fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above) - including having chills
- dry cough





- fatigue (tiredness)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this could mean they're completely gone or just different to normal
- nasal congestion (runny or blocked nose)
- conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)
- sore throat
- headache
- muscle or joint pain (aches and pains)
- different types of skin rash
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhoea
- chills or dizziness

Q. Do children/staff who have no symptoms need to restrict their movements if someone in the house has symptoms of Covid-19 and is awaiting a test result?

Yes, **unless** they are fully vaccinated or have had a confirmed Covid-19 infection within the past 9 months.

Q. Why are these changes being made?

This advice is being provided because effective vaccines against Covid-19 are now available and a robust vaccination programme is underway in Ireland for children aged 12 years and older. This along with mitigation measures in schools such as physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette help to prevent the spread of the virus.

Together, we can control the spread and help keep our school and community safe. Thank you for your continued support.

Is mise le meas,

Lorna Gerrard
Acting Principal

