

Extract from HSE document for schools (Sept 2020)

Q: Should siblings/household members of someone with symptoms be removed from the school setting?

A: Only under certain circumstances: if the GP of the pupil/student/ staff member decides that their symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, (for example, fever OR a new cough, shortness of breath, deterioration of existing respiratory condition any loss of or changes to the sense of smell or taste), that person becomes a suspected case of COVID-19 and will be referred for a test. It is at this point that members of the symptomatic person's household, including siblings or children of staff members, should be withdrawn from school by their parents or guardians.

Q. What is the period of restricted movements required of a pupil/student or staff member deemed to be a "close contact"?

A. Pupils/students will be asked to restrict their movements and not attend school for a full 14 days.

Q: Can the school share a name of the pupil/student or staff member who is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: No, the school cannot share the name of the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 (Covid-19 detected). This information is private and confidential. Close contacts will not be told the name of the confirmed case.

Q: If a pupil/student has symptoms which may be consistent with COVID-19 – what does the parents/ guardian need to do?

A: If a child has symptoms which could be consistent with COVID-19, the parents/guardians should call their GP. Their GP will decide whether they should be tested for COVID-19. If the GP determines that the child does need a COVID-19 test, it is at this point that all of their household contacts are asked to restrict their movements. This means that siblings or staff members in the same household as the person who has symptoms should be removed from the school setting. Only the symptomatic case is asked to self-isolate.

Q: Will a pupil/student's / staff members result be shared with the educational facility?

A: COVID-19 tests remain confidential as per patient – doctor confidentiality. No other pupil/student, parent, family or teacher will be informed of the results.

However, parents should be advised at the point of testing, that if their child's result is positive for COVID-19(SARS-CoV-2-19 detected) then it will likely need to be shared with an appropriate named individual within the school/educational facility, if this is deemed necessary by the Medical Officer of Health for onward safe management of the situation.

Q: If a test comes back as “not detected” for a symptomatic pupil/student/staff member, will the person still be required to restrict their movements and why?

A: Yes. If the person receives a negative / ‘not detected’ test result, the person should remain at home until they are well enough to return to school, unless parents/guardians of (pupil/students) or staff members are specifically asked by HSE public health to remain excluded because of further investigation.

A pupil/student /staff member can return to their normal activities, once they have been given either:

- a negative (‘not-detected’) test result **and** are 48 hours without symptoms or
- another diagnosis, which is not COVID-19.

Those who live with the person will then no longer need to restrict their movements.

Q: If a test comes back ‘SARS-CoV-2 detected’ (confirmed case of COVID-19) will the pupil /student/staff member still be required to self-isolate?

A: If a person was symptomatic for COVID-19 they should already be self-isolating. If a close contact who was restricting their movements receives a positive COVID-19 test result (SARS-CoV-2 detected), they are now a confirmed case of COVID-19 and must self-isolate; additionally, their close contacts including household contacts must now also start restricting their movements. They may already have been restricting their movements, however if only one person in the house was deemed a close contact from an exposure outside the house e.g. in the school, then the other family members would not have been restricting their movements until this point.

Q: If a pupil/student//staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 and self-isolated for 10 days thereafter, can they return to school/work?

A: Yes, provided that both of the following apply:

- they have not had a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or over) for 5 days
- it has been 10 days since they first developed symptoms