A parent's guide to close contacts

This guide sets out what to expect when your child has been told they are a close contact of Covid-19 in school.

The HSE is working closely with schools to make sure the health of all children and staff in the school is protected. If a person has been diagnosed with Covid-19, the HSE will identify everyone who has been in close contact with the person with Covid-19. This includes the parents/guardians of all children as well as any staff who were in close contact with the person.

Close contact

If your child has been identified as a close contact, it means they have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19. Please try not to worry. The risk of your child becoming infected with Covid-19 from this close contact is small. Less than 2 children in 100 children tested as close contacts are found to have Covid-19 too. Even if your child does become infected with the virus, most children don't get any symptoms, or have a very mild illness.

My child is a close contact

The school will contact you to bring your child home from school, if they are identified as a close contact. Please make sure the school has your most up-to-date contact information so they can call you if your child needs to be picked up.

You will naturally be concerned, but if your child has no symptoms of Covid-19, please follow the advice below. If your child has symptoms of Covid-19, please immediately isolate your child and ring your GP.

My child's COVID-19 test

Keep your phone close to you and make sure it is switched on. The HSE will contact you to organise coronavirus testing for your child free of charge. You will receive a text message with details of the test appointment location, date and time. Most people receive their test result within 2 days.

> The HSE will arrange a free COVID-19 test for your child and contact you with the appointment. Do not ring your GP, unless your child developed symptoms.

Restricting your child's movements

Your child must restrict their movements for 14 days, since they were last in close contact with the person who has tested positive for Covid-19. The HSE will tell you the date the 14 days of restricted movements will finish.

Restricting movements means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. During the 14 days restricted movements your child cannot:

- attend school, childcare or any group activities
- use public transport
- visit other people's homes or have visitors to your home

Your child can go outside to attend a medical appointment or to exercise as long as they keep 2 metres distance from other people.

The rest of the household

If your child who is a close contact is feeling well, with no symptoms of COVID-19, other people in the household do not need to restrict their movements. They can continue to go to work, school, preschool or childcare. But, if they have also been told they are also a close contact of COVID-19, they would then need to restrict their movements.

If your child tests negative (COVID-19 virus not found)

If your child, who is a close contact with no symptoms of COVID-19, receives a negative result, they still need to restrict their movements:

- for 14 days, or
- until the date you were told to restrict their movements until

This is because it can take up to 2 weeks to develop infection of COVID-19.

If your child tests positive (COVID-19 virus found)

Your child will need to self-isolate (stay in their room) if their test result is positive (COVID-19 virus found).

People in your household will need to restrict their movements (stay at home) for 14 days. Household siblings cannot attend school and adults at home should not go to work.

You, or whoever is the main carer of the child in self-isolation, will need to restrict your movements for 17 days. This includes the 10 days that your child is in isolation and for 7 days after your child's isolation period ends.

Your child must self-isolate until:

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

If you child has no symptoms, they can stop self-isolating 10 days from the date of their test.

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 after a negative result

If your child had a negative (COVID-19 virus was not detected) test result but later goes on to develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate your child and phone your GP.

Explain to your GP that your child was tested as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 and they have now developed symptoms of COVID-19. The GP will discuss referring your child for another free coronavirus test.

If your child develops COVID-19 symptoms, people in your household need to restrict their movements now and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 after a positive result

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, but has already had a positive result from their close contact test, then they do not need to be tested again. The symptoms for COVID-19 can start after the positive/'detected' test result.

You must keep your child isolated (you may need to isolate with them) and use all infection control measures possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the house e.g. distancing as much as physically possible, hand washing, covering your mouth and nose if you cough, keeping surfaces clean and avoiding touching your face.

People in the household need to restrict their movements and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

If your child's symptoms get worse

Phone your GP or GP out of hours service immediately if your child's symptoms of COVID-19 get worse.

Privacy

The school cannot share the name of the child or staff member who tested positive (COVID-19 detected). This information is private and confidential. Close contacts will not be told the name of the person with COVID-19 unless the parent or guardian of the child or member of staff gives permission.

Where do I go for more information?
Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 (coronavirus) is available on hse.ie. If you have any queries you can call HSELive on 1850 24 1850 from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 5pm on Saturday. You can also contact the HSE by email on hselive@hse.ie

Useful websites

https://www.gov.ie/en/
https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/
https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/child-close-contact-covid-19-school.html

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