



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. Around 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 is a close contact with no symptoms of Covid-19

Keep your phone close to you and make sure it is switched on. The HSE will contact you via text message to organise a COVID-19 test for your child, free of charge.

Your child will be tested on two occasions. The date your child was last in contact with a person with COVID-19 will determine what dates your child will be tested:

Test 1: The first test will be known as a 'Day 0' test. The HSE will aim to test your child, and the other children/staff members, as soon as possible after they are notified of them being a close contact. 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. If your child's test result from their Day 0 test is negative/not detected, they still need to continue to restrict their movements.

Test 2: The second test is known as a 'Day 10' test. This test may take place 10 days after your child was last in contact with a person with COVID-19. 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. If your child's test result from their Day

10 test is negative/not detected, your child can end their restricted movements and return to school.

The HSE will arrange free coronavirus testing for your child - you do not need to contact your GP to arrange a test.

Restricting your child's movements

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

Restricting movements means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. During their time of 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.

People who live with the child who is a close contact:

If your child who has been identified as a close contact is feeling well, with no symptoms of Covid-19, other people in the house do not need to restrict their movements. This means that:

- Adults living in the house can continue to go to work
- Other children in the house can continue to go to school, preschool or childcare

Your child's test 'Not detected' (negative) results

If your child, who is a close contact with no symptoms of Covid-19, receives a 'not detected' (negative) result on Day 0, they still need to restrict their movements:

- until they receive a negative result at the Day 10 test, 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.

Your child's test 'Detected' (Positive) test result

If your child receives a 'detected' (positive) result your child must now self-isolate. This means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. People in your

household must now restrict their movements and be treated as close contacts*. Household siblings cannot attend school and adults at home should not go to work.

*Please note contact tracing guidelines for those who have significant vaccine protection will vary. Please see [here](#) for further information.

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

Please note it is advised that the below wear a surgical face mask rather than a face cloth covering: (if appropriate – see * below)

- people who have confirmed COVID-19
- people who have symptoms of COVID-19
- household contacts of confirmed cases

The main reason for this is to help stop the spread of COVID-19 within the home during the infectious period.

What if my child develops symptoms of Covid-19?

You must isolate your child and phone your GP if your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 and has **not** had a positive / 'detected' test result. Explain to your GP that they are a close contact of a case of Covid-19 and they now too have symptoms of Covid-19. The GP will discuss referring your child for another free coronavirus test. People in your household need to restrict their movements now and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work. . Contact tracing guidelines may vary for those who have significant vaccine protection and are well. The HSE will advise you of this if this is the case. Please see [here](#) for further information.

Phone your GP or GP out of hours service immediately if your child's symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) get worse.

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19, but has already had a 'detected' / 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. wearing a surgical mask (if appropriate – see * below) distancing as much as physically possible, hand washing, covering your mouth and nose if you cough, keeping surfaces clean and avoiding touching your face.

Phone your GP or GP out of hours service immediately if your child's symptoms of coronavirus (Covid-19) get worse.

Symptoms of Covid-19:

- a high temperature (38C or above),
- any kind of cough,
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties,
- or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

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](https://www.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 at hselive@hse.ie

*Children and face coverings

- Face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of 13, but some children may choose to wear one. Young children may not follow the advice about wearing a face covering correctly.
- Children under 13 on rare occasions may be asked to wear a face-covering. For example, some children may be advised to do this when attending a hospital clinic.

Useful websites

<https://www.gov.ie/en/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>