

When to self-isolate: Public Health Information Cell response to queries

Date: 18th September 2020

1. A little one has been sent home with a cough from the pre-school on their site. Should they send the siblings who attend the school home too?

All children who are symptomatic for Covid-19 (new continuous cough/new high temperature/loss of or change in sense of smell) should be sent home to self-isolate. The early-years [guidance](#) states that all symptomatic individuals and their **household contacts** should **not** attend early years setting. Therefore, other members of the child's household, including **siblings**, should also **go home and isolate** for 14 days.

The parents of the symptomatic child should book the child a Covid-19 [Test](#). Any household contacts of symptomatic individuals are also eligible for Covid-19 [testing](#).

If the child's test result is negative and the child feels well, then the isolation period can stop for the entire household. However, everyone needs to isolate until all symptomatic members of the household/support bubble test negative. Additionally, isolation may need to continue if individuals are told to self-isolate for 14 days by NHS Test and Trace.

If the Covid-19 test is positive, then the child needs to isolate for at least 10 days from their first symptomatic day, and the household contacts 14 days from the child's first symptomatic day. If the child receives a positive test result but is asymptomatic, the isolation period is from the day of the positive test result. The child may then return to the early years setting after the period of isolation only if they do not have any Covid-19 symptoms other than a cough or loss of smell or taste. If household contacts develop symptoms, they need to isolate and stay at home for at least 10 days after their symptoms appear.

Parents should **inform** the early-years setting immediately of the results of a test.

Further guidance for households can be found [here](#).

2. If a child at the school is sent home with symptoms do they send siblings home too?

As above... The same protocol is in place for school settings as early-years settings. Guidance for schools can be found [here](#). The **symptomatic child** and all **household contacts including siblings** need to **go home and self-isolate** for 14 days.

When do they notify other parents with children in the same bubble – before a test or after if the test is positive and then do they close the whole bubble and ask all the children and families in that bubble to isolate for 14 days?

Parents should inform the school immediately of the results of a Covid-19 test. When schools become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for Covid-19, they need to contact the local health protection team. Alternatively, the health protection team will inform the school if someone who has tested positive attended their school through the NHS Test and Trace programme.

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the infectious person, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with schools and guide them through the subsequent actions required. The health protection team will provide the school with definitive advice on who needs to be sent home, including those in close contact with the individual who has tested positive.

The guidance recommends schools keep a record of pupils and staff in each group or “bubble” to assist the health protection team.

As the “bubbles” vary in each educational setting, it is not possible to provide an overarching guidance on who will be asked to go home following a positive case of Covid-19. However, the local health protection team will provide guidance.

Finally, a health protection team endorsed template letter and/or communication tools will be available for schools to send to parents and staff if required. Schools must not share the names or details of people with Covid-19 unless essential to protect others.

There is no national guidance as to when schools should communicate with parents of children in/outside the symptomatic/confirmed cases bubble. We advise at the following points, though schools are able to use their discretion, dependant on the situation and concern levels of parents at the time:

- Once a positive test has been confirmed. If you notify parents/carers of every suspected case it could cause undue alarm, and there may well be a number of suspected cases that test negative. However, if carers/parents raise concerns you may wish to communicate what the national guidance and advice is in relation to siblings and those children within the same bubble.
- Schools should inform both parents of children within the same bubble and outside of the bubble once there is a confirmed case within the schools, and provide reassurance about the actions being taken to contain and prevent the spread of COVID transmission, and according to the advice of the health protection team. The HPT will provide advice and templates to support communications.

And what about staff who have come in to contact with the bubble?

Personal protective equipment must be worn by staff caring for the symptomatic child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, as per this guidance.

Any members of staff who have helped a symptomatic child and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water ideally, or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned after they have left, and the current guidance on PPE must be followed.

- 3. Finally, a teacher has a young (own) child with a high temperature so the school have given her one of their tests because they were offered one in Fife!!! I have advised that**

the teacher and the family need to isolate until they receive either a negative test result or for 14 days. Is this right?

Guidance regarding Covid-19 test results can be found [here](#). The teacher and family need to stay home and self isolate until the results of the test come through.

If the child's test result is negative and the child feels well, then the isolation period can stop for the entire household. However, everyone needs to isolate until all symptomatic members of the household/support bubble test negative.

If the Covid-19 test is positive, then the child needs to isolate for at least 10 days from their first symptomatic day, and the household contacts 14 days from the child's first symptomatic day. The child may then return to the educational setting after the period of isolation only if they do not have any Covid-19 symptoms other than a cough or loss of smell or taste.

If the test result is inconclusive, ensure to get another test as soon as possible, within 5 days of the symptoms starting. If unable to get a test within this time frame, isolation is required for 10 days from the first symptomatic day. Further guidance is available [here](#) for inconclusive results.