

Respiratory illness

This information is based on the national guidance: [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#).

Respiratory illness includes influenza (flu), coronavirus (COVID-19), and common colds. As these infections have similar symptoms it can be difficult to tell which infection a child has.

Respiratory illness symptoms in children:

- Runny or blocked nose
- High temperature
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Losing your voice
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired
- Aching body
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Feeling sick or being sick
- Loss or change to sense of smell or taste

When should children with symptoms of respiratory illness or a positive COVID-19 test stop coming to school, nursery, or college?

Children with a high temperature or who feel too unwell to come to school should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose can continue to come to school.

Current guidance advises that children and young people are not tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.

Children who are tested after advice from a health professional and receive a **positive COVID-19 test**, should stay at home until they feel well enough to return. They should not return for at least 3 full days after the test was taken. Staff who test positive for COVID-19 should stay at home until they feel well enough to return and should not return for at least 5 days after the test.



What should we do in the education setting?

Ensure children who should be staying at home are doing so in accordance with the guidance above.

Encourage children to wash their hands. Children should use soap and water or alcohol hand gel regularly, but especially before eating or handling food, after using the toilet, and after coughing or sneezing.

Encourage children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue (or sleeve) when sneezing or coughing, dispose of the tissue, and then wash their hands.

Maintain a thorough cleaning regime, especially in kitchens, bathrooms, and areas where there are groups of children with symptoms. Objects such as light switches and handrails that are touched frequently throughout the day should be cleaned more regularly.

Equipment such as dishwashers and washing machines should be appropriately maintained to ensure they remain operational.

Ensure there is fresh air throughout your setting. Consider opening windows, trickle vents and grilles, whilst balancing the need for a comfortable indoor temperature.

Discourage children from sharing cutlery, towels, clothes, bedding, or baths.

Encourage eligible children to take up the vaccination offer for flu and COVID.

Free flu vaccination is available for:

- all children aged 2 or 3 years old on 31st August 2023
- all primary aged children (reception to Y6)
- secondary school-aged children in years 7 to 11
- those aged 6 months to under 65 years in [clinical risk groups](#)
- Adults who are over 65, pregnant, carers, live in residential care homes, close contacts of immunocompromised people or frontline workers in social care.

The free COVID autumn booster is available for:

- Adults aged 65 years and over
- Children and adults aged 6-months to 65 years who are in a [clinical risk group](#)
- Frontline health and social care workers
- Children and adults aged 12-65 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression.
- Children and adults aged 16-64 years who are carers or work in care homes for older adults.

Contact the CCT (cct@derby.gov.uk) and UKHSA health protection team (0344 2254 524) if there is a higher than previously experienced, or rapidly increasing number of staff or pupil absences due to respiratory illness. You should also contact the UKHSA if there is evidence of more severe disease due to respiratory illness, such as hospitalisations or deaths.



Teaching resources:

Early years - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS1 - [hand and respiratory hygiene](#)

KS2 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS3 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

KS4 - [hand and respiratory hygiene and vaccinations](#)

