

Red bag alert:

Changes to COVID-19 guidance from 1st April

From 1st April national COVID-19 education guidance has changed, and you should now consult UKHSA's '[health protection in schools and other childcare facilities](#)' guidance for advice on managing specific infectious diseases, including COVID-19. New guidance for those people with symptoms of respiratory infection, including COVID-19, has also been released: [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Key sections from these documents relating to COVID-19 are highlighted below.

Please note our team is working through the new changes; we will be updating our education guidance and Q&A resources and these will be circulated via the Red Bag in due course.

Our advice remains to continue with your key infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of infection, and use a risk-based approach to manage specific incidents.

Regards

North Yorkshire Public Health Team

Key points to note from [health protection in schools and other childcare facilities](#): 'Respiratory infections, including coronavirus (COVID-19)' include:

Symptoms

Children with respiratory infections can experience a range of symptoms including a runny nose, high temperature, cough and sore throat.

It is not possible to tell which germ someone is infected with based on symptoms alone.

Some children aged under 2 years, especially those with a heart condition or born prematurely, and very young infants, are at increased risk of hospitalisation from RSV.

Spread

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. Sneezing, coughing, singing and talking may spread respiratory droplets from an infected person to someone close by.

Droplets from the mouth or nose may also contaminate hands, eating and drinking utensils, toys or other items and spread to those who may use or touch them, particularly if they then touch their nose or mouth.

Exclusion

Children with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education or childcare setting.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a [high temperature](#) should stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people. They can go back to education or childcare setting when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough.

If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and where possible avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day, they took the test. The risk

of passing the infection on to others is much lower after 3 days, if they feel well and do not have a high temperature.

Children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.

Do

Ensure that any children and young people who have a high temperature and are unwell do not attend the education or childcare setting until they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.

Encourage all children with respiratory symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

Advise children or young people with a positive COVID-19 test result try to stay at home for 3 days after the day they took their test.

Any staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result should try to stay at home for 5 days after the day they took the test .

Advise all staff and students to follow the 'Living safely with COVID-19' and other respiratory infections guidance.

You should contact your [UKHSA HPT](#) if there is:

- a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to acute respiratory infection
- evidence of severe disease due to respiratory infection, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital

What to do if you suspect an outbreak or incident

All settings should have in place baseline infection prevention and control measures that will help to manage the spread of infection.

If an outbreak or incident is suspected, education and childcare settings should review and reinforce the baseline infection prevention and control measures they already have in place.

This will include:

- ensuring that all staff and students who are unwell do not attend the setting. Further guidance on the management of specific infectious diseases, including advised exclusion periods can be found in chapter 3
- ensuring all eligible groups are enabled and supported to take up the offer of [national immunisation](#) programmes including coronavirus (COVID-19) and flu
- ensuring occupied spaces are well ventilated and let fresh air in
- reinforcing good hygiene practices such as frequent cleaning, see chapter 2

- considering communications to raise awareness among parents and carers of the outbreak or incident and to reinforce key messages, including the use of clear hand and respiratory hygiene measures within the setting such as [E-Bug](#)

Settings or parents or carers may wish to speak to their health visitor (childcare settings) or school nurse (all schools) about the support they can offer.

General COVID-19 guidance

Updated general national guidance can be found here [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), which includes guidance on children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19.

Key points to note are:

Children and young people (aged 18 years and under) who have symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19

Respiratory infections are common in children and young people, particularly during the winter months. Symptoms can be caused by several respiratory infections including the common cold, COVID-19 and RSV.

For most children and young people, these illnesses will not be serious, and they will soon recover following rest and plenty of fluids.

Very few children and young people with respiratory infections become seriously unwell. This is also true for children and young people with long-term conditions. Some children under 2, especially those born prematurely or with a heart condition, can be more seriously unwell from [RSV](#).

Attending education is hugely important for children and young people's health and their future.

When children and young people with symptoms should stay at home and when they can return to education

Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.

Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.

All children and young people with respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when coughing and/or sneezing and to wash their hands after using or disposing of tissues.

It can be difficult to know when to seek help if your child is unwell. If you are worried about your child, especially if they are aged under 2 years old, then you should seek medical help.