



East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department

Responding to COVID-19 in Schools and Nurseries

Correct at 7 August 2020

Overview

With the return of schools and nurseries from August 12th, it is vitally important that all staff, parents and pupils are extra vigilant to the symptoms of COVID:

- New continuous cough
- Fever/high temperature
- Loss of or change in sense of taste or smell

We are especially reliant on parents to be proactive should any child or young person develop symptoms at home. We are very clear that should any pupil display any of the above symptoms, they should not be attending and we would expect the family to follow the appropriate Test and Protect guidance.

Symptomatic

While in school/nursery, all pupils should be encouraged to alert a member of staff if they start to feel unwell with any of the above symptoms. Where a pupil displays symptoms, their parent/carer should be contacted immediately and asked to come and collect their child. On being collected, they should be advised to follow the Test and Protect guidance and self-isolate. All buildings have specific rooms identified within their risk assessments where pupils can isolate while waiting to be collected with appropriate measures in place. Where it is a child who is unable to isolate or may be uncomfortable doing so, appropriate PPE should be worn by the staff member waiting with them. At all times, the room should be well ventilated and appropriate cleaning measures taken following collection.

Where a member of staff starts to display COVID symptoms, they should seek to leave the building as soon as possible and advised to go home and follow the appropriate guidance. Where possible, staff should avoid using public transport, but where necessary they would be required to take all appropriate precautions.

Facilities Management staff have appropriate guidance on the cleaning requirements in the event that someone displays symptoms within the school.

If you have a member of staff or pupil who becomes unwell with COVID symptoms, or if a member of staff or pupil reports that they have COVID related symptoms and cannot come to the school, you have a responsibility to inform the Environmental Health Service. Details are provided within this document.

Recording of Absence

It is crucial that all absences are appropriately coded on SEEMIS as a means of tracking any potential spikes in infections or possible outbreaks, even where the pupils have not been in school. Specific codes will be shared to record this information.

Test and Protect – Schools

It is important that all staff are fully aware of the Test and Protect scheme and the importance of this in ensuring the safe operation of schools in the months ahead. Please note, Test and Protect is only available to those aged 5 or over.

Where any staff member or pupils displays symptoms, they will be required to be tested to determine whether they have COVID. Testing for pupils and parents can be booked through NHS Inform: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-access-to-testing-for-coronavirus>

Staff displaying symptoms can also book a test through the above link. If staff experience difficulty in accessing this link, employers are able to refer employees. Please get in touch if you need more information on this process.

Crucially, staff or pupils should not self-isolate unless advised to do so by contact tracers. Should there be cases or an outbreak in any school, it is up to the Health Protection Team to advise on the appropriate measures which need to be taken, including the requirements of any individuals to self-isolate. This decision will take in to account the close contacts and any other mitigations that have been in place (for example, PPE, ventilation, etc).

You should confirm with a member of staff that they have been advised to self-isolate for 2 weeks by a contact tracer. This is not a decision that individuals will be able to take by themselves due to the impact on services. If an individual is required to self-isolate and is absent from work, you should look to cover this in the same way you would cover normal absence of this period.

Please note, in some cases, staff may be required to self-isolate due to someone else in their household having been in contact with a confirmed case. This should be treated as above and you should seek clarification from the member of staff that they have also been advised to self-isolate.

Confirmed Case

If you receive notification about a confirmed case in either a pupil or a member of staff, you should ensure that you contact the Health Protection Team, using the details below, in addition to the Education Department and Environmental Health Service. You must ensure that you confirm a positive case with the individual concerned.

Health Protection Team – 0141 201 4917 (phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)

Environmental Health Service – 0141 577 8487

Education Department – 0141 577 8635

In the event of a confirmed positive case, you will receive further information on next steps from the local Health Protection Team. The Education Department and Environmental Health Service will continue to offer support throughout this time.

Please note, you are required to notify the Health Protection Team of confirmed positive cases but do not need to notify of any possible or suspected cases.

Outbreak Management

Where there are 2 or more confirmed COVID cases within a school in a 14 day period, it is deemed to be an outbreak and appropriate measures must be taken. Where this is the case in your school, you must inform the local Health Protection Team, Environmental Health Service and the Education Department as soon as you become aware to ensure action can be taken. Schools have been given priority status with the Health Protection Teams nationally, so any enquiries should be dealt with quickly.

Health Protection Team – 0141 201 4917 (phpu@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)
Environmental Health Service – 0141 577 8487
Education Department – 0141 577 8635

Should an outbreak be identified, the Health Protection Team will liaise with both the school and Education Department to identify and recommend appropriate actions which should be taken to manage the situation. This will be based on the expert advice relating to the specific circumstances of the outbreak. We will look at whether specific measures require to be put in place to support clinically vulnerable or pupils who have been shielding so far. This will be supported by information from the Health Protection Team.

There is a recognition that there may be pupils who are absent for other illnesses, for example with the flu. In the event of an outbreak, the Health Protection Team may also look to consider these cases and whether they may be linked to a wider COVID outbreak.

This will be supported by the national Test and Protect scheme.

COVID Cases – Communication with Parents and Families

We are very conscious that many parents will be anxious about pupils returning to school in August. It is hugely important that parents are advised of the need to be sensitive and not share rumours or speculate about any situations in the months ahead to avoid causing panic or unnecessary stress for other families.

Where any individual feels unwell and displays symptoms, they will leave the school and be advised to follow the Test and Protect guidance. While awaiting results, they will be required to self-isolate. This is a national approach and will ensure we minimise the risk to everyone else in the school.

Should a member of staff or a pupil test positive, the local Health Protection Team will be in touch with those who may be at risk and advise of any action required. If you are not contacted, this means you are not considered to be at any additional risk and there is therefore no need to self-isolate.

It is very important that we recognise, particularly as we move towards autumn and winter, that there will be higher rates of pupil and staff absence from sickness and neither staff, pupils or parents should be speculating on the reasons for this.

It is not our intention to routinely share information on testing with parents or staff on an ongoing basis as any necessary measures for self-isolation will be advised to individuals directly. However, in the event of an outbreak, we will work closely with the local Health Protection Team to determine the best means of communicating with everyone, as appropriate.

For clarity, as expected, we will not be sharing any information on individuals with any staff or parents. Again, should a member of staff or pupil test positive, a decision will be taken by the Health Protection Team about any close contacts who may require to self-isolate.

It is important to note that any decision to temporarily close schools will be taken following consultation with the Health Protection Team. It is envisaged that this would only take place in the event of a widespread outbreak and would be part of a wider course of action to control any spread. At this time, school contingency plans would be put in place to support out of school learning.

REMEMBER

If a pupil or member of staff either displays symptoms or advises you that they have symptoms, you should:

- 1) Arrange for the pupil or member of staff to leave the school or nursery and follow the appropriate Test & Protect guidance.**
- 2) Contact Environmental Health on 0141 577 8487**
- 3) Contact Education Department on 0141 577 8635**

In the event that you have a confirmed positive case, you should also contact the local Health Protection Team on 0141 201 4917.

This document will continue to be reviewed based on Scottish Government and Public Health guidance. Updated guidance will be provided to Head Teachers as required.