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Date 7 September 2020  
Your Ref  
Our Ref LMcN/KW

Enquiries to  
Extension  
Direct line  
E-mail  
Website [www.nhsaaa.net](http://www.nhsaaa.net)

Dear Parent or Carer

I am writing to you to give you the latest, up-to-date advice on COVID-19 testing and hopefully address some of your concerns and questions.

Since schools returned in the middle of August, there has understandably been a sharp rise in requests for COVID-19 tests, particularly from parents concerned for their children.

However, in order to ensure we do everything we can to prevent a rise in cases, we want to remind people how the testing system works and free up testing for those who really need it.

Firstly, only people who are symptomatic should book a test unless you are asked to get a test by Public Health as part of the management of an outbreak in your community.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature or fever
- a new continuous cough
- a loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

If your child develops one of these symptoms then do not send them to school. They (and any household members), should self-isolate whilst your child with symptoms is tested.

*working together to protect and improve health*

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You only need one of the symptoms above to be tested. This can be done by visiting the NHS Inform website – [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot) . (Residents on the Isle of Arran should call 01770 601 033.)

We realise the testing centres have been very busy recently but remember that home testing kits are also available or you can call again the following day to get an appointment for testing.

I also want to stress that while family members (including siblings) need to self-isolate if someone in their household develops symptoms, they do not need to be tested unless they themselves go on to develop symptoms.

If you are contacted by Test and Protect to tell you that you are a close contact of somebody with COVID-19, you do not require a test but you must isolate for 14 days. A test will not change the need to self-isolate.

If your child is asked to stay off school as they have been identified as a close contact of a positive case, this does not mean other members of your household need to self-isolate, unless the person self-isolating goes on to develop symptoms.

If you need urgent medical help for you or your child, please call NHS 24 or contact your GP.

For further information, please see the attached parent/carer information leaflet.

If you require help with any questions you have about COVID-19 that are not answered online, or you do not have internet access, please call the free helpline number 0800 028 2816. The helpline is open from 8.00am to 10.00pm each day.

I want to thank everyone for their continued support and patience. We all need to keep work together as we move into the next phase in the fight against this virus.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lynne McNiven'.

**Lynne McNiven**  
**Interim Director of Public Health (Joint)**

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## Common cold and COVID-19 symptoms

### Information for parents and carers

We know that these last few months have often been challenging, particularly for parents and carers.

Now that schools and nurseries have returned, we want to provide some advice if your child has symptoms of the common cold or similar bugs during this pandemic.

When children return to school after a prolonged break, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

**This is not the case for children and young people with potential COVID-19 symptoms. They are required to self-isolate and seek a test through [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot) or by calling 0800 028 2816.**

So that your child does not miss out on their education, it is important for parents and carers to know how COVID-19 symptoms differ from those of other infections that we normally see at this time of year.

#### COVID-19 symptoms

It is important that all of us are vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19 and understand what actions to take if someone develops them, either at school or at home.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

If your child develops any of these symptoms, they must self-isolate. You should book them a test as soon as possible. Visit

[www.NHSinform.scot/test-andprotect](http://www.NHSinform.scot/test-andprotect) or call 0800 028 2816.

**Only children with these symptoms need a test.**

It is essential that people who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who share a household with someone who has symptoms, do not attend school, nursery or other childcare settings, and must self-isolate along with all members of their household.

If the test is negative, self-isolation can end for everyone.

If the test is positive, the Test and Protect team will give you further advice.

#### Cold-like symptoms

If, however, your child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they do not need to self-isolate. Your child can go to school if fit to do so.

#### Further information

For further advice, please visit the Parent Club website at [www.parentclub.scot](http://www.parentclub.scot) or [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot).

**Working together to achieve the healthiest life possible for everyone in Ayrshire and Arran**

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