

Defining symptoms of Covid for children to help manage system pressure

Advice issued by Hampshire County Council – September 2020

Now that children are at school, it is important that parents are able to access the right support if their child becomes unwell and that schools can signpost parents and carers to appropriate sources of help.

If a parent reports that a child has symptoms of Covid-19 - a high temperature; a continuous cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if the child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual); loss of taste and smell. The parent or carer should be advised to arrange for the child to self-isolate, to contact [Coronavirus NHS](#) for further advice and to book a test.

If a child or staff member test positive for Covid-19, then contact the Public Health England local Health Protection Team so they can undertake a risk assessment and provide public health advice on 0344 2253861 (press 2 to reach local H10W team) (0844 967 0082 out of hours).

Other childhood illnesses - if a child is unwell with other, non-Covid-19 symptoms, such as sore throat, earache, stomach ache, runny nose, skin rashes, or a winter related illness such as norovirus with vomiting and diarrhoea, then parents are advised to check **NHS 111 online** health condition advice. Or to check - [is my child too ill to go to school](#), and contact their local pharmacy or GP if they need further help.

The NHS 111 phone line should only be used for an urgent medical problem where parents or carers are unsure what to do. If a child is too ill to attend school, the parent or carer should advise the school as per normal and arrange to care for the child at home until they are well enough to return.

For schools there is also [government guidelines](#) that say when a child should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

Evidence of need to self-isolate or that child does not have COVID-19

GPs and other health professionals are not able to provide letters, notes or evidence that a child is COVID-19 free or if a child has been told to self-isolate.

Further the NHS coronavirus isolation note service is for employees who have been told to self-isolate and whose employer has requested that they provide evidence of this. It is not intended for parents to request on behalf of a child to provide to an educational establishment.

[Urgent and emergency care](#) explains how to access urgent assistance for a child.

The advice as always is to call 999 if it is a medical emergency - when someone is seriously ill or injured, or their life is at risk.