

Respiratory illness

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.

Children who have received a **positive coronavirus 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 practice good respiratory hygiene. They should 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 good ventilation 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 coronavirus:

- The NHS influenza immunisation programme for 2022-23 is offering all children aged 2 or 3 years old on 31st August 2022, and all primary aged children (reception to Y6) an NHS flu vaccine. In addition, children who are in clinical risk groups, carers, contacts of immunocompromised people, and pregnant people are also eligible. More information on school-based immunisation will be available later in the year.
- The NHS is offering all children aged 5-years-old and above the COVID-19 vaccine. They can book their vaccination appointment online or contact their GP surgery.

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. In addition, 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](#)

