

Message from the HSE COVID-19 Health Protection Schools Response 22.11.2021

SYMPTOMS

Reminder for all parents, students and staff to keep an eye on their health and to check for symptoms of COVID-19. **Symptoms of Covid-19 can include some or all of the following:**

- fever (temperature of 38°C or higher),
- cough,
- shortness of breath,
- any loss or change to the senses of smell or taste,
- headache,
- sore throat,
- or a runny nose.

If any pupil or member of staff develops these symptoms they must self-isolate and contact their GP for advice regarding a COVID-19 test.

A NEGATIVE ANTIGEN TEST DOES NOT MEAN THAT STUDENTS OR STAFF WITH SYMPTOMS CAN ATTEND SCHOOL UNLESS ADVISED TO DO SO BY THEIR GP.

CLOSE CONTACTS

What is the advice for close contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms are not required to restrict their movements. Close contacts will receive a text message with a link to a website where they provide their relevant details. When this has been done they will receive a text message with information about their antigen tests. Instructions of when and how to undertake the antigen tests are provided to those close contacts. If a fully vaccinated close contact has symptoms then they will be advised to self-isolate and book for PCR testing.

What about the families of those who are close contacts?

Other people who live at home with the close contact do not need to restrict their movements, provided the close contact has no Covid symptoms. This means they can continue to attend school. **If the close contact tests positive for COVID-19 or develops symptoms of COVID, the household will then need to restrict their movements and contact their GP.**

What is the advice for HOUSEHOLD close contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

A household close contact is someone who was in close contact with a person who tested positive in a residential setting (e.g., a house, flat or apartment). A household close contact who is fully vaccinated and does not have symptoms must:

- restrict their movements (stay at home) for 5 days from when they get the text message from the HSE.
- do 3 antigen tests with 2 days between each test. Do all 3 antigen tests, even when the 5 days restricting movements (stay at home) has ended.

What is the advice for close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

Close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated will need to go for two PCR tests for COVID-19, one as soon as possible and one on Day 10 after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case. They will need to restrict their movements ([stay at home](#)) until the Day 10 test has been done. This includes not attending work or school. If the Day 10 test result is “not detected” or negative, the pupil or staff member can return to school provided they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

PREVENTION

Even with high population uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, it is important that you continue to support the pupils and staff of your school community during the COVID-19 pandemic in the effective manner you have been. It is important to reinforce to your school community that all public health guidelines still need to be followed to protect the health of pupils and staff, these include:

- **wearing face coverings**
- **cleaning hands regularly**
- **maintaining physical distance from others**
- **being mindful of the ventilation of classrooms by opening windows and doors as appropriate**

VACCINATION

Encourage all those who are eligible for vaccination within your school community to access appropriate information around this (available at <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>)

For those wishing to arrange vaccination, they can do so at either: Register using the HSE Vaccine portal (<https://vaccine.hse.ie/#register>) **OR** phone the **HSE at 1800 700 700**

When is a person considered to be fully-vaccinated?

- a. 7 days after receipt of the second Pfizer-BioNTech dose (two dose vaccination course)
- b. 15 days after receipt of the second AstraZeneca dose (two dose vaccination course)
- c. 14 days after receipt of the second Moderna dose (two dose vaccination course)
- d. 14 days after receipt of the first Johnson & Johnson vaccine (one dose vaccination course)

MORE INFORMATION

Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 is available on [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie).
We thank you for your help and support as we continue to live with COVID-19.