

# Managing illness in schools and early childhood

One of the most important things we can do to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in our community is to stay at home when we are unwell, even when we have the mildest of symptoms.

## What you need to know

### 1. If a child is unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay at home

If a child becomes unwell during the day, they must be collected from school/early childhood education and care (ECEC) as soon as possible.

### 2. If a child has any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) outlined below, however mild, they should get tested and they must remain at home until they receive their results:

- fever
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss of sense of smell or taste.

In certain circumstances headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea may also be considered symptoms.

For further advice:

- call the 24-hour coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline 1800 675 398
- call a general practitioner
- use the Department of Health online self-assessment tool.
- Visit: [Where to get tested](#).

### 3. A child must stay at home until they are symptom free, even if their coronavirus (COVID-19) test is negative

If a person has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or been identified as a close contact they must isolate/quarantine until they receive clearance from DHHS.

**Children with persistent symptoms due to underlying conditions such as hay fever or asthma** whose symptoms are clearly typical of their condition can continue to attend ECEC/school. They should be tested for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms that are different to or worse than their usual symptoms. They should consider getting a medical certificate from their GP to attend ECEC/school if they have persistent symptoms that may overlap with symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or runny nose.

**Younger children (pre-school up to Grade 2) may have prolonged post viral symptoms** such as a runny nose or cough and may return to school/ ECEC following a negative COVID-19 test even

if they are not completely free of symptoms. They will need a medical certificate from their GP to confirm they are otherwise well or have recovered from their acute illness.

For information on the minimum periods students and children need to stay at home for other conditions, refer to the DHHS school exclusion table.

#### **4. Children do NOT need a medical certificate before returning to school/ECEC**

Once symptoms have cleared, there is no requirement from the Department of Health for children/students to have a medical certificate before they return to school/ECEC.

**Thank you for your support in following these steps, together we can all stay safe.**