

# Managing illness in schools and early childhood education and care services – information for parents and carers

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*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 your child is unwell, even with the mildest of symptoms, they must stay home.

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

### 2. If your child has any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) below, however mild, they should get tested for COVID-19:

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

Some people may also have headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. For more health advice:

- call the 24-hour COVID-19 Hotline 1800 675 398
- call your child's general practitioner (GP)
- call Nurse on Call 1300 606 024

### 3. Your child can be tested with a rapid antigen test at home, or a PCR test. They must stay at home until they receive a negative result and their symptoms have resolved.

- If you can't get a rapid antigen test or if you're still worried about your child, you can [find and go to a testing site](#) for a PCR test. Some [testing sites have rapid antigen tests](#) as well.
- If a rapid antigen test is negative but your child is symptomatic, your child should have a PCR test done.
- Find advice about [getting tested](#), as well as [parent and carer information about rapid antigen testing](#).

#### 4. If your child has a negative COVID-19 test and their symptoms have resolved, they can return to ECEC or school.

- You don't need written medical clearance from COVID-19.
- There are illnesses other than COVID-19 where your child must stay at home for a certain amount of time – these are listed on the Department of Health ECEC and [school exclusion table](#).

#### 5. A medical certificate is not needed, but may be helpful if your child:

- **has ongoing symptoms due to underlying conditions such as hay fever or asthma**
  - If their symptoms are usual for their condition, they can keep going to ECEC or school.
  - A medical certificate describing their condition can help ECEC and schools better know your child's health and care plans.
- **is younger (pre-school up to Grade 2) and has ongoing symptoms after a viral illness**
  - Children can still have a cough or runny nose after recovering from some common [viral illnesses](#) – if they are otherwise well, they can go to ECEC or school.
  - Your ECEC or school might ask for a medical certificate from their GP to make sure your child is otherwise well.
- **Remember: if your child's symptoms are different or worse than usual, they should stay at home, get tested for COVID-19 again, and seek health advice.**

#### 6. If your child has a positive COVID-19 test, they must stay at home:

- Follow the [checklist for people with COVID-19](#).
- If a [rapid antigen test](#) at home is positive, report the result as soon as you can so your family can start getting advice and help:
  - Tell the [Department of Health](#) by online form or COVID-19 Hotline 1800 675 398.
  - Tell your ECEC or school (including other children at home who are [household contacts](#)).
- Answer [texts and surveys from the Department of Health](#).
- You may be able to get [financial help](#) or [other help](#) to look after your family safely at home.
- **When your child finishes their quarantine period**, you don't need written medical clearance from COVID-19 to return to ECEC or school.

#### Further information

- All families can plan and prepare ahead for COVID-19 at home using [this checklist](#).
- You can find information about COVID-19 in [different languages](#).

This advice has been prepared by the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health.