



Office of the Director of Public Health

Public Health
West Offices
Station Rise
York YO1 6GA

Date: 4 March 2021

Email: enquiries.publichealth@york.gov.uk

Dear parent/carer,

Subject: 8 March Return to Education

We wanted to get in touch with you as children and young people across the city prepare to return to school/college on **Monday 8 March**.

Your child's school/college will have been in touch with you about the arrangements they have put in place with regards to testing and also measures to stop the virus from spreading.

Throughout the pandemic there have been very few cases which have been linked to the virus spreading in schools. We hope to keep it that way and are supporting education settings who have put in place lots of measures to stop the spread of the virus.

Testing is another form of defence against the virus. 1 in 3 cases of coronavirus have no symptoms so picking up cases early can make a huge difference and reduce the number of cases in the city. Schools/colleges will have shared the arrangements for testing secondary school age pupils with you.

We'd like to add a couple of points:

- Please do not get tested if you have tested positive for Coronavirus in the past 90 days. This is because it is highly likely that the test will show a positive result because you may still be shedding the virus, though you will not be infectious after the initial 10 day isolation period.
- If your child receives a negative test it means they can go to school/college. It is possible to become infected in the hours or days after taking a rapid test - so please remember to continue to follow government guidance on social distancing, good hand hygiene, and practice 'Hands, Face, Space'
- Testing for primary school-age children who do not have covid symptoms is not recommended at present. However, families and support bubbles of all school age children can access regular symptom free testing if they wish to. This can be through a workplace programme via their employer, at one of our three symptom-free testing sites (see www.york.gov.uk/CoronavirusTesting for more

details), or by using a home testing kit (visit www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests for more details)

- Please remember if you or your child have Covid symptoms that you need to self-isolate and book a test by calling 119 or visiting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

Symptoms to look out for

The main symptoms of coronavirus in children are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

What to do if your child has any of the main symptoms of coronavirus:

1. Get a test to check if they have coronavirus as soon as possible (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or call 119)
2. You, your child and anyone else you live with should stay at home and not have visitors until you get the test result – only leave your home to have the test
3. If they test positive you and anyone else you live with must stay at home for 10 days

Anyone in your support bubble should also stay at home if your child has been in close contact with them since their symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started.

Other symptoms

There have been a number of other symptoms widely reported for children who have tested positive for COVID-19. These include:

- nasal congestion or runny nose
- sore throat
- diarrhoea and vomiting
- stomach pain
- headache
- muscle ache (myalgia).

While it does seem like children can get a wider range of coronavirus symptoms than adults, these symptoms could also be a sign of another infection or illness entirely. It is important not to miss the signs of another serious illness. So we would encourage you to use the attached poster to help you to decide what medical help you need. You can also use NHS 111 online (<https://111.nhs.uk/>).

Thank you for your support. We know how hard this past year has been and how challenging looking after children while working from home is. We really appreciate your hard work to reduce the spread of the virus in York.

The return of more children to schools/colleges is the start of a journey back to normality. Whilst rates have fallen significantly in the city thanks to everyone's efforts, we all need to continue to follow the rules and further reduce the numbers of cases down.

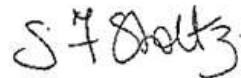
The advice remains to stay at home as much as you can, but please do try to find time to exercise if you can and get some fresh air. It can make a difference to your physical and mental health. Sadly we still can't socialise and mix with other groups just yet but if we keep our efforts going that will be able to happen in the weeks and months ahead.

Thanks for all you are doing. Your school/college will continue to share information with you in the coming days.

Yours sincerely,



Amanda Hatton
Corporate Director of People



Sharon Stoltz
Director: Public Health

Advice for parents during coronavirus

Whilst coronavirus is infectious to children it is rarely serious. If your child is unwell it is likely to be a non-coronavirus illness, rather than coronavirus itself.

Whilst it is extremely important to follow Government advice to stay at home during this period, it can be confusing to know what to do when your child is unwell or injured. Remember that NHS 111, GPs and hospitals are still providing the same safe care that they have always done. Here is some advice to help:



RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to the touch
- Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), has an irregular breathing pattern or starts **grunting**
- Severe difficulty in breathing becoming agitated or unresponsive
- Is going blue round the lips
- Has a fit/seizure
- Becomes extremely distressed (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused, very lethargic (difficult to wake) or unresponsive
- Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass test')
- Has testicular pain, especially in teenage boys

You need urgent help:

Go to the nearest A&E department
or phone 999



AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Is finding it hard to breathe including drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs (**recession**) or **head bobbing**
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)
- Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy) or irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or picking up) - especially if they remain drowsy or irritable despite their fever coming down
- Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain
- Babies under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F
- Infants 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F
- For all infants and children with a fever above 38°C for more than 5 days.
- Is getting worse or if you are worried
- Has persistent vomiting and/or persistent severe abdominal pain
- Has blood in their poo or wee
- Any limb injury causing reduced movement, persistent pain or head injury causing persistent crying or drowsiness

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.

Please ring your GP surgery or call
NHS 111 - dial 111

The NHS is working for you.
However, we recognise during the current coronavirus crisis at peak times, access to a health care professional may be delayed. If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a GP or 111, then take your child to the nearest A&E



GREEN

If none of the above features are present

- You can continue to provide your child care at home. Information is also available on NHS Choices
- Additional **advice** is available to families for coping with crying of well babies **ICON**
- Additional **advice** is available for children with complex health needs and disabilities.

Self care

Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 - dial 111