



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Education, Skills & Children's Services

Covid-19 Testing – Advice for Parents and Pupils

With the full return of pupils to schools, parents and pupils will have questions and concerns in relation to what to do if they experience symptoms or are unwell in relation to attendance in school and whether Covid-19 testing should be considered.

The following advice and guidance applies equally to parents and pupils and should be considered carefully in relation to attendance at school.

What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

NHS guidance states that the main symptoms of Covid-19 are as follows:

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (37.8°C or higher).
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

People with Covid-19 typically have at least one of these symptoms.

Could my symptoms be a cold? I'm not sure.

It can be difficult to distinguish symptoms of Covid-19 from that of common seasonal illnesses such as colds and flu. A blocked or runny nose and sneezing are not common symptoms of Covid-19 and, equally, it is uncommon to have a fever accompanying a cold, but parents are encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance.

If a school or nursery pupil is displaying symptoms that you are unsure about, keep them at home and monitor the development and progress of symptoms closely. If you are concerned or believe that they are the Covid-19 symptoms described above, visit [NHS Inform](#) for more information and consider requesting a test.

My child or someone in my household has possible Covid-19 symptoms. What should I do?

If you believe that any member of your household is displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19 described above, you must act quickly.

- **Self-Isolate:** All members of the household must immediately self-isolate. Children in the household must not be sent to school or nursery.
- **Ask for a Test:** All members of the household with symptoms should be referred for a Covid-19 test. There are three ways to request a test in the Western Isles, [detailed here](#).
- **Inform:** Ensure that you promptly notify employers and any schools or nurseries that your household is self-isolating and awaiting testing.

What happens if a pupil begins to show Covid-19 symptoms in school?

Symptoms of the virus can develop at any time and that means that schools have carefully prepared to respond to any pupils or staff who begin to display symptoms during the school day.

- The symptomatic person will immediately be taken to an identified isolation room by staff wearing protective personal equipment.
- Their parents/carers or emergency contacts will be informed.
- The pupil must be collected and taken home as soon as possible.
- Siblings or other household members in the same or other schools will be contacted and sent home.
- The household must self-isolate and request a Covid-19 test.
- The isolation room and any areas the pupil accessed will be deep cleaned.

How do I request a Covid-19 test in the Western Isles?

NHS Western Isles provides access to Covid-19 testing and there are three ways to request a test for any symptomatic members of your household.

- 1) **Online:** Complete the [NHSWI Online Testing Referral Form](#)
- 2) **E-Mail:** Send an e-mail with your details to wi-hb.covid19queries@nhs.net
- 3) **Telephone:** Call the local Covid-19 helpline: 01851 601151

The telephone line is staffed Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm, with an answerphone messaging service available out-with these hours. You will be contacted by NHS Western Isles staff to book a testing appointment time. NHS Western Isles aims to test as soon as practicable.

Should I inform work, school or nursery that we are self-isolating?

Yes. It is important that you inform any employers, schools or nurseries attended by your household that you think you have Covid-19 symptoms. Schools are required to record any absences related to Covid-19 using a special set of codes and it is important that school offices are informed of absences and the reasons for them. Any unexplained absences will be followed-up by school staff.

How do we self-isolate?

If you think you have symptoms and haven't yet been tested or have received a positive test, it is very important that you and all the members of your household self-isolate. This means that everyone in the house must stay at home and not go to work or school and should not travel, visit retail premises or have contact with other households. Further advice on self-isolating can be found here: [NHS Inform Self Isolation Guidance](#)

I have received a negative test result. Can I go back to school/work?

In the following circumstances, it is possible for the members of a household to go back to work and school and end the period of self-isolation.

You can return to work, school or nursery after a negative test result if:

- **everyone in your household with symptoms receives a negative test result too;**
- **you are well enough and have not had a fever for at least 48 hours.**

You must inform the school or nursery of an intention for a pupil to return after a negative result and staff may, with your consent, seek evidence of the outcome of the test.

You **cannot** return to work, school or nursery after a negative test result if:

- **you have been told you are a close contact of another patient by the Test and Protect service**
- **you have a negative test result but someone in your house has a positive test;**
- **someone else in your household has Covid-19 symptoms and has not been tested or has not yet had confirmation of a result.**

After returning to school following a negative test, you must continue to be vigilant of symptoms. If pupils begin to display any of the identified symptoms again, they must immediately self-isolate and seek a re-test.

I have received a positive test result. What now?

If you or any member of your household receives a positive test, your whole household (and any members of an extended household) must self-isolate and NHS Test and Protect procedures will be initiated. You will be contacted and asked to identify recent contacts and they will be traced and also asked to isolate.

Household members with symptoms must continue to isolate for 10 days from onset of the symptoms and any other members of the household (or extended household) for 14 days.

Immediately upon confirmation of a positive test result, you must inform any school or nursery settings attended by the household and you should also inform employers. Similarly, you should discuss any return to school after isolation with the Head Teacher.

What is involved in Test & Protect (Test, Trace and Isolate)?

Test and Protect is the process initiated after confirmation of a positive test result. NHS contact tracing staff will:

- contact you by phone or text message – there's no need to log in to a website;
- ask you who you live with, who you have been physically close to recently and where you have been;
- decide which of these people might be infected based on how long they spent with you and how physically close they were (typically, closer than 2m for more than 15mins);
- contact these people to tell them to isolate for 14 days

As someone who has tested positive, your identity will not be shared with contacts unless you have provided consent for it to be shared.

Please be vigilant of scams and fraudulent callers purporting to be contact tracers. There is advice available on [NHS Inform](#) about how to avoid contact tracing scams. Anyone calling to contact trace will be able to tell you how to confirm they are genuine.

More information about Test and Protect can be accessed via the NHS Inform link, above.

When could I return to school or work after a positive test?

You may return to school, nursery, work and other activities after the full period of self-isolation has ended and you are sufficiently well, being free of fever for at least 48hrs. The minimum self-isolation requirements are as follows.

- **Person with positive test:** 10 days self-isolation from onset of symptoms with a return to school/work on 11th day subject to being free of fever for 48hrs.
- **Other household members:** 14 days isolation from contact with a return to school/work on the 15th day, subject to continuing to be symptom-free.

We have recently return home after travel abroad. Do we need to isolate or seek a test?

Depending on what country or territory you were travelling from you and anyone else travelling with you may need to self-isolate (quarantine) for fourteen days. The current list of countries with restrictions and exemptions is available from the [Scottish Government](#). The list is being frequently updated and travellers are responsible for ensuring compliance with quarantine rules.

Children travelling back from any restricted countries must observe quarantine rules in full and cannot attend school or nursery until their 14 day self-isolation has concluded. The full quarantine period must be observed even if you are tested and in receipt of a negative result.

Will a school or nursery be closed if a positive case is linked to it?

Any decisions about the impact of a positive Covid-19 case on the operation of a school will be determined following an assessment undertaken by the Comhairle and NHS public health officials. This assessment will consider the circumstances of the individual case and the degree or contacts and risks presented. The reporting of one positive case may not result in the closure of a whole school but could lead to a class or year group being asked not to attend for an agreed period.

If additional positive cases are linked to the same school, this will affect decisions about the safe operation of the school and could be classified as an outbreak.

In all cases, parents will be kept informed of impact on school operations and the Comhairle has contingency plans in place for education to continue, should restrictions be placed on the opening of any schools.

Where can I find out more information?

The following web links provide the latest and most up-to-date information about requirements and guidance in relation to Covid-19.

- [NHS Inform – Covid-19 Guidance](#)
- [Scottish Government – Coronavirus Pages](#)
- [NHS Western Isles – Outer Hebrides Covid-19 Website](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Coronavirus Pages](#)
- [Parent Club](#)