



# Symptoms management & Remote Learning provision

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**The Diamond Primary School**

M Beattie  
Principal

This document aims to outline our approach to reacting to symptoms of Covid-19. As such, it must first be noted that we, as educational staff, are not medically trained and we hold no expertise in the area of infection, viral symptoms or illnesses. We are merely trying to take the guidance we have been provided with by HSC, PHA, DE & EANI and apply it to the circumstances we meet in school. All families have been provided with the DE and HSC document (blue and yellow poster) entitled Information for Parents and Carers.

We may not always get the decision right, but we must aim to make wise decisions and always take the side of caution.



## The symptoms of Covid-19

The three symptoms upon which we must act as individuals, families and schools are;

1. A high temperature
2. A new persistent cough
3. A loss or change to the sense of taste or smell

If any of the above symptoms are displayed in your child, we would urge you to follow the guidelines and **isolate the symptomatic person for at least 10 days; all other members of the household must isolate for at least 14 days.**

If one or more symptoms are displayed, there is a five day window within which you can be tested for Covid-19. If this test result is negative, then the symptomatic child can return to school, provided they are fever free and well enough to do so. If the child has been isolating because a member of the household had symptoms, the child may return to school once the symptomatic person has received a negative test result, provided the child has not developed any symptoms of their own.

Children will be welcomed back to school after a completed isolation period or negative test result, even if a cough is still lingering on.

As educators, we are acting outside our comfort zone when placed in the position of deciding whether the symptoms are clearly evident. We require understanding and patience from the whole school community as we aim to maintain a safe environment for all our pupils and staff. We wish to be clear about our approach to decision making in this area, and so we have tried to define the criteria within our setting.



## Defining the symptoms

**In defining the symptoms further, we are trying to create lines or markers that will help us establish whether a child should remain at home or be sent home from school and if they should isolate for 10 days and apply for a test.**



### 1. A high temperature

If a child appears to be 'under the weather' in school and displaying signs of being generally unwell, we may decide to take their temperature using the non-contact infra-red thermometer. Signs that a child may be unwell would include;

- Complaints from the child about feeling unwell or hot
- Lethargy and weariness
- Upset stomach or frequent toileting
- Pale appearance
- Clammy skin
- Runny nose, sniffing, head cold etc

We may decide to use the thermometer to establish if the child has a fever or raised temperature. If a temperature of 37.6/37.7 is recorded, we may monitor and contact parents. **If a temperature of 37.8 or higher is recorded, we will ask parents to collect the child from school immediately. This will require completion of the isolation period or a negative Covid-19 test result.**

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## 2. A new persistent cough

This is very hard to define and undoubtedly the symptom that will cause the most confusion and potentially the most disagreement. We will try to be flexible in this area and make decisions on a case by case basis, but there are some principles and parameters that we will aim to apply.

- “It’s a common cold” - whilst I appreciate that many of the coughs experienced throughout the school will be related to a cold, I do not have the right to make the assumptive distinction between colds and Covid at a time such as this. It is clear that cold-type symptoms do not rule out the presence of Covid-19, therefore if a persistent cough develops at any time;
  - **We must treat the cough as a symptom on its own, and a potential indicator of coronavirus.**
- This Covid symptom is defined as ‘new’ and ‘persistent’ yet it is very difficult to establish what ‘persistent’ actually means. Guidance states that it could be defined as “coughing a lot for more than an hour” or “three coughing episodes within 24 hours”. Given that we can’t clearly quantify ‘a lot’ or ‘an episode’, we will define a new persistent cough as fitting into statements such as this;
  - **Coughing more than once every few minutes**
  - **Coughing every few minutes**
  - **Coughing every 5 - 10 minutes on average**
  - **Coughing regularly within 10/15 minutes, repeatedly throughout a morning/day**

This is not an exhaustive list of statements but hopefully it defines how we will approach the issue, without panicking about the odd cough here and there. We will obviously take into consideration whether the cough is more frequent than would usually be the case for an individual, and whether it sounds aggressive (like a bark).

We are always happy to discuss a child’s circumstances with parents and come to a reasoned decision, case by case.

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### **3. Loss or change to the sense of taste or smell**

Unlike the cough and temperature, this symptom cannot be measured or observed/verified by us. The only way we, in school, would become aware of this symptom would be if a child or parent tells us that it has been experienced.

Should a child communicate this in school, we *may* contact parents to arrange for the child to be collected from school. We would advise that you contact your GP to discuss this and inform us of the medical advice given.

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### **4. Remote Learning Provision**

As a school, we must uphold the safety and welfare of all children and adults within the school environment at all times. As a result, we will always adhere to the government guidelines regarding absence and isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Undoubtedly, this will result in school absences. Where children are absent from school due to symptoms of Covid-19 and periods of isolation at home, the school will be glad to provide work for the children remotely via Seesaw.

However, we do not expect children to work at home if they are unwell and unable to do so. If children are experiencing sickness of any kind, the priority is recovery back to full health. With this in mind, we do not require the work to be completed and sent back to school; it will be provided through Seesaw so that parents can partner with the school in keeping their children up to date where possible. The work should not be sent back to the teacher for marking.

Please bear in mind that not all activities that have been conducted in class (particularly practical activities) will lend themselves to a remote learning format.