

1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
  2. COVID-19: guidance for educational settings (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>)
- 
1. Department  
for Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>)
  2. Public Health  
England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>)

Guidance

# COVID-19: guidance for education settings

Updated 16 March 2020

## Contents

What you need to know

Background

Symptoms

What to do if someone develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site

Limiting spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in educational settings

Cleaning and Waste

Tools for use in childcare and educational settings



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## What you need to know

- staff, young people and children should stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature to avoid spreading infection to others. Otherwise they should attend education or work as normal
- if staff, young people or children become unwell on site with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home
- clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using your standard cleaning products
- supervise young children to ensure they wash their hands for 20 seconds more often than usual with soap and water or hand sanitiser and catch coughs and sneezes in tissues
- posters and lesson plans on general hand hygiene can be found on the eBug website (<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>)
- unless you have been directly advised to close by the local Public Health England Health Protection Team, we recommend all education settings remain open

## Background

This guidance will assist staff in addressing coronavirus (COVID-19) in educational settings. This includes childcare, schools, further and higher educational institutions.

This guidance may be updated in line with the changing situation.

## Symptoms

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough or a high temperature.

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection.

## What to do if someone develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) on site

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in an education setting they should be sent home and advised to follow the staying at home guidance

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>).

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

If they need clinical advice, they (or their teacher, parent or guardian) should go online to NHS 111 (<https://111.nhs.uk/>) (or call 111 if they don't have internet access). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell.

In most cases, closure of the educational setting will not be needed but this will be a local decision based on various factors such as establishment size and risk of further spread.

If there is an urgent public health action to take, the educational setting will be contacted by the local Public Health England Health Protection Team who will undertake a risk assessment and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. PHE will rarely advise a school to close but this may be necessary if there are so many staff being isolated that the school has operational issues. Your local authority will support you to make this assessment. PHE will work with the headteacher, principal or management team, and the Local Authority Public Health team, to advise on the management of children, pupils, students or staff.

## **Limiting spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in educational settings**

Education settings can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by reminding everyone of the public health advice.

Staff, children, pupils, students and families should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal.

Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products. Posters, leaflets and other materials

(<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016>) are available.

## **Cleaning and Waste**

See guidance on cleaning and waste disposal (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>).

## **Tools for use in childcare and educational settings**

There is a dedicated helpline number for educational settings – please call 0800 046 8687 for any specific question not covered on this page.

PHE has resource materials (<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5016>) that contain public health advice about how you can help stop the spread of viruses, like those that cause coronavirus (COVID-19), by practising good respiratory and hand hygiene. To access, download and share this information, you will need to register for an account which only takes a couple of minutes.

Use e-Bug (<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>) resources to teach pupils about hygiene.

Education Scotland produces resources for the use of schools in Scotland.