

Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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To all parents and carers

### **Common Cold and COVID-19 Symptoms**

At the beginning of the new academic year I wanted to write to all parents and carers to emphasise the importance of young people returning to educational settings and to reassure you and them that it is safe for Jersey's primary and secondary schools and colleges to fully open with the recommended public health measures that are in place.

I also want to provide some important advice where a child or young person in your care presents with symptoms of the common cold or similar conditions during this pandemic to ensure that children do not miss any more school than is essential.

Following the return of schools after a prolonged break, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. In many cases, children will be well enough to attend school and continue their learning with little or no interruption to their education. In other cases, for instance where they have quite a heavy cold, they may need to take a day or two off to recover.

This is not the case for children and young people with potential COVID-19 symptoms, they are required to self-isolate and parents are advised to call the coronavirus helpline on 01534 445566 as soon as possible to get advice and arrange a test.

In order to ensure your children do not miss out on their education, we need to be clear about how COVID-19 symptoms differ from those of other infections that we normally see circulating at this time of year.

### **COVID-19 Symptoms**

It is important that all of us - including those who make up the community around a school - are vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19 and understand what actions we should take if someone develops them, either at school or at home.

The three main symptoms to be aware of are:

- new continuous cough
- fever / high temperature
- change or loss of smell and / or taste

If a young person or a child in your care develops any of the three main symptoms above, they should self-isolate and you should call the coronavirus helpline on 01534 445566 as soon as possible to get advice and arrange a test. Diarrhoea and vomiting can also be a feature of COVID-19 and are more common in children than adults.

It is essential that pupils who have COVID-19 symptoms do not attend school, nursery or other childcare settings, and must self-isolate along with all members of their household. Children who share a household with an individual who has COVID symptoms should also stay at home pending investigation of the symptomatic individual.

If the test on the symptomatic individual is negative, self-isolation can end for everyone. If the test is positive, the contact tracing team will contact you and give you further advice.

### Cold-like symptoms

If, however, your child does **not** have any of the **three main symptoms of COVID-19** but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they and you do not need to self-isolate. Your child can go to school if fit to do so.

The diagram below provides a simple reference point but if you are at all unsure about whether or not your child has COVID-19 symptoms, please call the helpline on 01534 445566.

We appreciate the huge effort being made by parents, carers and school staff to ensure the risk of COVID-19 is minimised and to support children's education.

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