

What does “very high risk” mean?

DES Guidance requires a child to be “medically certified” as being at very high risk of Covid-19. Please consult with your school principal in the first instance and if necessary, your GP, or child’s care team regarding this.

My child is immuno-compromised/high-risk, what happens if I don’t send him/her to school?

Children who are medically certified as being very high risk will be facilitated by their school to continue their learning by the best means available. Please consult with your school principal.

I/Someone I care for/who lives with us, am/is high-risk, I’m concerned about my child bringing the virus home?

Under DES Guidelines pupils are expected to attend school as usual except for those students who are medically certified as very high risk. Please refer to HSE link above on how to stay safe.

Will I be prosecuted if I keep my child/children home for Covid-19 reasons? (immuno-compromised etc.)

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 schools will still be obliged to report to Tusla, children who have missed in excess of twenty school days as they have always done. Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) will then take into account, on a case by case basis, the individual circumstances for students who feel unwell with symptoms consistent with Covid-19 or who have been informed to self-isolate and not to attend school. TESS will work with schools, students and their parents to support them as required.

What if there’s a second wave, will schools close again?

The National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) makes decisions in relation to national Covid-19 actions. NPHE then advises the Government who in turn decides what action to take. Local Public Health Specialists are responsible for making decisions should local responses be required.

Can I home-school my child until the virus is gone?

Under DES Guidelines pupils are expected to attend school as usual except those who are medically certified as very high risk. In Ireland children must be registered for education either in a school or in a home setting, there is no provision for registration in both settings.

Can my child still be registered at a school if I have decided to home-school?

Parents should be aware that if following a home school assessment, it is decided that the child is in receipt of a certain minimum education their name will be placed on the home education (Section 14) register. The child's name will then be removed from the register of a recognised school, if they attended a recognised school prior to engaging in home education.

Is it possible to partially home-school my child/children?

No. In Ireland all children must be registered for education either in a school or as being home educated, there is no provision for registration in both settings.

Can my child wear a mask to school?

The DES recommends that second level students and teachers wear a face covering in school where physical distancing may not be possible. It is not advised that primary level students wear face coverings. Wearing a face covering does not negate the need to stay at home if showing symptoms. Please consult with your principal in relation to this.

Are there remote learning options for families unhappy with sending their child/children to school as things stand?

No. Under DES Guidelines pupils are expected to attend school as usual except or those who are medically certified as very high risk.

What happens if a child/teacher falls ill with Covid-19 symptoms?

The DES has issued guidance to schools on the appropriate response to take should a student/teacher become ill while at school. If a student develops symptoms while at school they should inform their teacher immediately. The child will then be taken to a designated isolation room and parents/guardians will be contacted.

What happens if a case of Covid-19 occurs in a classroom?

Management of confirmed cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools will be Public Health led, and action taken will be based on Public Health risk assessment undertaken by the regional Department of Public Health. There is no 'one size fits all' approach for the management of cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools. This is because every situation and every school is different. Many factors are considered in deciding the right course of action in each individual situation.

What happens if a teacher/student falls ill with Covid-19, must the whole class quarantine etc.?

This will be determined on a case by case basis by the Public Health team leading the management of an outbreak.

How are teachers who fall ill and must quarantine to be covered/replaced?

The DES has been working to ensure the appointment and availability of substitute teachers across the country to assist in a situation such as this.

What if a family member of a teacher/student falls ill with Covid-19? Must they then quarantine also?

The DES says that children, teachers and parents should not go to into a school if they or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with Covid-19. It is very important that people do not attend schools if they or members of their household are unwell. These households should contact their GP for guidance immediately.

Will my child's absences be counted against them if they fall ill with Covid-19 or must isolate/quarantine due to family illness?

If a student falls ill or has to quarantine due to Covid-19 the days missed from school will be recorded as absences, however once the school receives an appropriate note of the reason for the absences the school will record the absences as explained absences.

I don't want to send my child/children back until there's a vaccine.

Under DES Guidelines pupils are expected to attend school as usual except for those who are medically certified as very high risk.

I'm unhappy with the government roadmap, I don't think it's sufficiently safe.

The government roadmap has been developed based on the expert advice of NPHE and is constantly reviewed and updated to take account of new information and evidence of best practice worldwide.

I'm unhappy with my child/children's school and feel they are not implementing sufficient safety measures.

Parents/Guardians can review all the guidance provided to schools by visiting the DES Covid-19 webpages by clicking [here](#). Should you note that your child's school is not following the guidelines parents should contact either the school principal or the schools Covid-19 lead worker to discuss your concerns.

I have received a letter from my son's school saying his class group will only be in school for 2 days a week. My daughter's school has class every day. Is this allowed? How can I challenge this? Can I make a formal complaint?

Schools have been provided with guidelines from the DES in relation to class size management, implementing social distancing etc. and should use these guidelines to the best of their ability, however each school is different and will have different needs, availability of space and resources etc. If as a parent you are concerned with the local arrangements made in your child's school contact your school principal in the first instance.

I received a School Attendance Notice from TESS before the lockdown, what happens now? Am I to be prosecuted?

A School Attendance Notice is valid for a 2-year period. Your child's school will be aware of the Notice and will ensure the Roll is marked accurately. A School Attendance Notice does not automatically result in prosecution and you should talk to the EWO who issued the Notice to discuss further.

I had a call from the school asking me not to return my child as he has a conduct disorder and the school feels he might not obey the social distancing rules and this poses a health & safety risk. What should I do?

Children cannot be refused entry to school unless they are suspended for a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour. Contact your child's school to discuss arrangements and plans being made for all students and whether an additional plan is needed for your child. The guidance counsellor, where available, school should be able to assist you here. If your child has been diagnosed with a conduct disorder the school will have applied for additional resources with the NCSE in order to ensure his/her full participation in learning. Be sure to discuss with your child the need to keep everyone safe from Covid-19 by observing the guidelines.

My child's school has said they are putting cameras in the classroom so that classes can be watched at home on the phone if a child can't come

in to school due to a cold or other minor ailment. If the school does this and he watches the class, is he still marked absent?

Yes. Under DES Guidelines pupils are expected to attend school as usual except or those who are medically certified as very high risk, as such pupils will be only marked present when they are in attendance in school. Furthermore unless schools have conducted an appropriate Data Risk Assessment and have full consent for all students it will not be advisable to stream classes live.

My child keeps getting in trouble in class for messing and not listening. But he says he doesn't understand what the teacher is saying because she is wearing a mask.

If your child has difficulty hearing the teacher, you should bring this to the attention of the school. Teachers can wear visors instead of masks and schools can also provide a teacher with a microphone and speaker to ensure all students can hear the teacher.

My 16 year old is meant to be in TY but he is very anxious and refusing to attend. He is with CAMHS but would not engage in the online sessions. Can an EWO be assigned to him to make a reintegration plan with the school?

Advice and guidance is available via your local Education Welfare office, please click [here](#) for contact details. The National Educational Psychological Services have also created resources to support those anxious about the return to school, please click [here](#).

Our county is in lockdown but my child attends school in a bordering county, can they still go to school?

According to public health guidelines, people living in a county under localised restrictions are allowed to travel outside the county to attend work, school etc. Public transport should not be used unless absolutely necessary.

If my county goes into lockdown will the schools close? Will my child still have to go to school?

Clear advice will be provided by Public Health specialists if local lockdowns are put in place. Keeping schools open is a national priority and unless advised otherwise schools will remain open.

If my child has to quarantine while being tested will those days be marked absent?

Yes. If a student has to quarantine due to Covid-19 the days missed from school will be recorded as absences, however once the school receives an appropriate explanation of the reason for the absences the school will record the absences as explained absences.

If a child will not be attending school because he/she is very high risk, must the parent provide a medical cert stating this? (DES guidelines state in this situation the school is responsible for continuity of learning for the child.)

DES guidance requires a child to be medically certified as very high risk, please consult your GP or child's care team regarding this. Your child's school will also be able to advise in relation to this.

My child does not fall into the public health "Very high risk" category but has asthma and I am not going to send him back to school as I believe it unsafe, the school will not provide remote learning, what do I do to make the school support my child's education at home until there is a vaccine?

Under DES guidelines all children who are not medically certified as very high risk should return to school. For those experiencing difficulty with this advice and assistance is available through the school and TESS. Consult with your school for further clarification.

One of my children is high risk, I therefore fear sending my other child/children to school, what can I do?

All children not medically certified as very high risk should return to school as normal, taking any precautions that may be in place locally.

Does a child have to quarantine for 14 days before returning to school if they have left the country, even if to a green list country?

Government policy in this area continues to apply for everyone, students included. It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days.

My child had cold and flu like symptoms, what should I do? How long should I keep them out of school?

Students who have symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, new cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, or loss or change to their sense of smell or taste, should not attend school. Please phone your doctor and follow guidance on self-isolation. Your doctor will advise whether COVID-19 testing is required and will arrange testing if necessary.

My child's school is facilitating my child to learn from home but also says they will continue to mark my child absent while learning from home, can they do this?

Yes. Those pupils who are considered "very high risk" due to COVID-19 and are engaging with learning through adapted education provision should be marked as present in school attendance records.

If your child is not considered as being in the very high risk category then s/he will be marked absent if not attending school.

My child is learning from home with the help of the school, do I still need to apply to the [home education section](#)?

If your child is included in the very high risk category and is being supported with learning from home by her/his school then you do not need to do anything further.

I want to home educate my child, can I apply for Home Tuition?

If you choose to home educate your child you will not qualify for home tuition support. Home Tuition is only available in very specific circumstances. Further information can be accessed on <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/>