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## What are the school COVID rules October 2023?

As we enter the winter months, your child may be showing symptoms that make you wonder whether they can go to school. We explain the UK government's latest guidance on school COVID rules October 2023.

The guidance in this article is taken from the **official government guidance for the UK on GOV.UK**. The information below is accurate for October 2023, but please feel free to visit this **link** to check for any updates to guidelines.

### What are the latest school COVID rules?

[COVID-19](#) presents a low risk to children, and being able to attend school is important for their wellbeing and academic performance. As a result, there are no longer specific rules in place to stop your child going to school or college.

Instead, you're encouraged to treat your child's respiratory symptoms the same way you would before the COVID-19 pandemic - like the [common cold](#) or [flu](#), which have very [similar symptoms](#) to COVID-19 and pose the same low-level threat to children.

Here's a summary of the latest government guidance for school COVID rules<sup>1</sup>:

1. If your child has COVID-like symptoms - don't test for COVID-19, unless told to by a health professional.

2. If their symptoms are mild – for example, your child has a [sore throat](#), runny nose, or slight cough but are otherwise feeling well, they can attend school.
3. If they have a temperature – if your child has a [high temperature](#) and feels unwell, they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people where possible. They can go back to school when they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough.
4. If you take a test and they test positive for COVID-19, the guidance is to try to stay at home and try to avoid other people for 3 days if they are under 18 years old – or 5 days if they are 18 or over.

## COVID rules for vulnerable children

Your child may have a health condition that leaves them more vulnerable to a serious COVID-19 infection – for example if they have a **weakened immune system**, severe **liver disease**, **Down's syndrome**, or are receiving **cancer treatment**.

In this case the COVID rules are:

1. You should test your child for COVID-19 – they will likely be eligible for a **free NHS test**, but you can also buy them from pharmacies.
2. You should try and keep them at home – to avoid contact with others. This is only for three days, as children tend to be infectious for less time than adults.

## Why is COVID-19 being dealt with the same as flu or a cold?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection like the common cold and flu. In March 2023, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) stated that COVID-19 was reaching a point where it can be treated the same way as seasonal flu – as a virus that is a threat to some people, but one that for most will only cause temporary symptoms, and will continue to evolve each year without causing more severe disease<sup>2</sup>.

As evidence for this, UK hospitalisations from COVID-19 have remained low throughout 2023 – despite [new COVID-19 variants](#) and new [symptoms of the Pirola strain](#).

This is largely due to the high rates of [COVID-19 vaccination](#) which are helping to protect society's most vulnerable. As we have seen with all common viruses that circulate in the colder months, children continue to be the most resilient to COVID-19 in the general population.

We also can't underestimate the importance of keeping our children in school. Time in school helps students stay safe, develop social skills, and reach their potential. High attendance is directly linked to how well your child does in their GCSE and A Levels<sup>3</sup>.

## Further reading

1. [GOV.UK: What are the latest rules around COVID-19 in schools, colleges, nurseries and other education settings?](#)
2. [WHO: Virtual press conference on COVID-19 & other global health emergencies.](#)
3. [GOV.UK: The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4.](#)

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