

Is it the common cold or COVID-19 symptoms?

Dear parents/carers,

I understand these last few months have often been challenging, particularly for parents and carers. Now that school have returned I am writing to provide some advice where a child or young person in your care presents with symptoms of the common cold or similar bugs during this pandemic. Following the return of schools after a prolonged break, it is common for colds and similar viral infections to circulate. We often call the autumn term the "Germ Term!"

In many cases, children will be well enough to attend St Bede's 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 seek a test. School will need to see proof of the test and its result.

In order to ensure your children do not miss out on their education, it is important 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 main symptoms to be aware of are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

If a young person or a child in your care develops any of the above symptoms, they should self-isolate and you should book them a test as soon as possible.

We recommend testing only for those with a continuous cough, fever, or loss of or change in the sense of taste or smell. The UK senior clinicians continue to keep the symptoms for case definition under review and will continue to use evidence to adjust these if it becomes necessary.

Cold-like symptoms

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

We really 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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