

### **What are the educational obligations of the school where parents do not want to send their children to school?**

The school is obliged to provide remote education to pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19. These pupils will be marked present in the roll book. All other pupils who do not attend school will be marked absent and the school does not have an obligation to provide them with remote education, but many schools will and may choose to do so.

Many schools will wish to make a distinction between children who are staying at home from school because they are self-isolating as a result of medical advice and children whose parents are keeping them at home because they do not feel that the school is a safe place for their children at present. Another category is children whose movement is restricted due to travelling to a non-green list country.

Although all of these categories are not Very High Risk to COVID-19, some schools may feel that children who are self-isolating to protect the wider school community, deserve to be supported remotely and may decide to support such children remotely. Schools will also need to be conscious of encouraging pupils who could be in school to return as soon as possible.

#### **For further guidance on:**

- Supporting remote learning for pupils at very high risk to COVID-19
- Pupils at risk of early school leaving
- Other pupils/parents who are anxious about returning to school
- Pupils who have been requested to self-isolate

Click Here: [Continuity of schooling: Supporting primary pupils who are at very high risk to COVID-19](#)

### **Parents have requested that their child does not use hand sanitiser**

In this instance, children will use soap and water for hand hygiene purposes, in accordance with the procedures set out in the school's Response Plan.

### **What is the guidance in relation to children wearing masks?**

HSPC advice (June 2020) is that children under 13 do not wear masks. That is the recommendation of the HPSC and has not been updated by HPSC or HSE to date. Parents may disagree and ask children to wear masks and that is a decision for the parent. Some schools will consider offering a child who has suspected symptoms of COVID-19 a mask during isolation, while at the same time being conscious of not upsetting or frightening the child.

### **Do the siblings of children who have been isolated and taken home also go home?**

Siblings of a child who has been isolated and taken home, due to suspected symptoms of COVID-19, are not to be sent home. The family GP and/or HSE will decide on who is to self-isolate – this is always a medical decision and will be made on the results of a test, if deemed necessary.

### **Further guidance to schools is provided in the following documents:**

[Schools Pathway for Covid-19, the Public Health approach](#) outlines the HPSC's guidelines on how a school should deal with a suspected case of COVID-19

In a [Letter to Principals from DES on 27<sup>th</sup> August](#), Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary at the DES, provides clear guidelines on the school's role in dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19 and also clearly outlines the stage when no further action is required from the school and the issue becomes one for the GP and/or HSE.

**What is the guidance in relation to SEN Integration into mainstream?**

The DES has not provided definitive advice on the integration of SEN pupils in its guidance. However, the DES is also very clear that, where possible, schools should facilitate this. The SEN Pupil would be part of two pods, one as part of the Special Class and one in the mainstream class. Each school's circumstances will be different and some may look to phase in this integration on a gradual basis over a period of time.