



21st July 2023

Deputy Paul Murphy TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ33605/23 - To ask the Minister for Health to outline the medical basis for the decision to recommend that children return to school three days after they have had a positive Covid test; and the reasoning that this recommendation was put forward by the HSE

Dear Deputy Murphy,

Current HSE guidance advises that children and young people (under 18 years of age) who have a positive COVID-19 test result (either PCR or antigen test confirmed) should stay at home and avoid contact with others for 3 full days, after the day they took the test or from the day their symptoms started (whichever was earliest). At the end of this period (after day 3), children and young people who feel well and do not have a high temperature, can return to normal activities.

This advice was published following a rigorous process including a review of published scientific literature and international guidelines produced by other jurisdictions, conducted in Autumn/Winter 2022 and again in Spring 2023 in advance of publication of the guidance in April 2023.

Considerations informing the guidance also included the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland at the time, including evidence of clinical impact and vaccine effectiveness. In developing the guidance, in relation to children and young people specifically, HSE recognised that a balanced response was required which acknowledged potential negative impact on children's scholastic achievement and social development (if isolated from school or other activities); low transmission dynamics among children and low risks of harm, and low potential for onward spread within a highly vaccinated population.

HSE continue to monitor the epidemiology of COVID-19 in the population in Ireland and constantly review the evidence to inform the development of future guidance.



* HSE, HPSC, April 2023. Public health advice for the management of COVID-19 cases and contacts. <https://www.hpsc.ie/az/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/contacttracingguidance/Public%20Health%20Advice%20for%20the%20management%20of%20cases%20and%20contacts%20of%20COVID-19.pdf>

I trust this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cuddihy".

Dr John Cuddihy

National Director of Public Health

MCRN: 16227