



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Press Release: Wednesday 22 September 2021

Statement from the Minister for Health on the public health management of cases and contacts and schools.

The Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD has today accepted recommendations in relation to measures for contact tracing and testing for childcare and primary schools. The new measures will come into effect from Monday and have been made following discussions with the National Public Health Emergency Team and the Chief Medical Officer.

Minister Donnelly has accepted the following recommendations, to be implemented from September 27:

- Automatic contact tracing of close contacts in childcare facilities and primary education will be discontinued (not including special education facilities).
- Testing of asymptomatic close contacts in childcare facilities and primary education will be discontinued (not including special education facilities).
- Children aged 13yrs or under, who are identified as close contacts in childcare, educational settings, special education settings or other non-household settings and who are asymptomatic will no longer be required to restrict movements, unless indicated by the local public health team.
- Children aged 13yrs or under who are identified as household close contacts in household settings will still be required to restrict movements and get tested, regardless of symptomatic status.
- Public health advice remains that any child aged 13yrs or under who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should rapidly self-isolate and not attend school or to socialise until 48 hours after they are symptom free.

Minister Donnelly said: “Throughout the pandemic, we have done our utmost to protect our school communities from the serious risks posed by COVID-19. The latest data indicates that schools continue to be a low-risk environment for transmission of COVID-19. As such, I am happy to be in a position today to announce these significant updates to contact tracing in our school environments.

“If you have any concerns or notice symptoms in members of your family, the public health advice remains to self-isolate and arrange a test as soon as possible. You should not attend school, or work or socialise.”

ENDS