

Coronavirus safety measures at schools and in early childhood education

The situation regarding the coronavirus epidemic has changed and the omicron virus variant is spreading rapidly in the population. The rapid increase in infections has led to the overloading of corona testing facilities and infection tracing, and there is no capacity in health care for rapid testing and tracing. As the testing facilities are highly congested, it is no longer the recommendation that home test results are confirmed with an official laboratory test, except in certain special cases (see below).

The transmission time of the omicron variant from one person to another is approximately 2 days. A significant proportion of COVID-19 cases are not diagnosed or traced. The disease caused by the virus variant is often mild. Those who are fully vaccinated (having received 2 or 3 vaccines) have good protection against the serious form of the disease.

Guidance for the general public is under review and varies between regions, depending on the epidemic situation.

In Kanta-Häme, the following measures are recommended:

1. The child has mild symptoms that match the description of the coronavirus infection

- **If symptomatic, the child must not attend school or day care.** The child should be kept at home for at least 5 days
- If symptoms persist for more than three days, we recommend that the child avoid contacts until they have been asymptomatic for at least two days (for a minimum of 5 days in total)
- Asymptomatic family members may go to work if working remotely is not possible, and asymptomatic children and young people can attend early childhood education, school and other educational institutions
- All unnecessary contacts should be avoided
- In mild cases, testing for coronavirus is not necessary. If desired, a coronavirus home test can be taken. When using a home test, a positive test result is quite reliable, but a negative test result does not rule out the possibility of coronavirus infection. Repeating the test and a negative result the next day will increase the reliability of the test
- If several family members have a similar respiratory infection and home tests show positive for coronavirus for 1–2 family members, it is not necessary to test all family members. People with COVID-19 must avoid contacts outside their immediate family
- If the home test is repeatedly negative, the child may attend school after two asymptomatic days
- If the home test is positive, let the school know about your child's positive home test result

2. When your family member has contracted the coronavirus

- The recommended period of self-isolation for an unvaccinated, asymptomatic child 5 days from exposure (=onset of symptoms).
- Asymptomatic patients who have received two vaccinations can continue attending school while monitoring the symptoms, maintaining good hygiene and avoiding unnecessary contact with others.

3. Exposure to coronavirus in schools and day care

- School classes and day care groups are not automatically quarantined even if exposed to the coronavirus.
- Exposures in schools and day care are not traced or reported in the current stage of the epidemic.

4. When to take the official corona test?

- Symptomatic
 - children aged 12 or older:
 - medical, nursing and customer service staff in health and social/disabled/elderly care
 - those at risk of severe illness
 - pregnant women
 - unvaccinated persons / persons who have not had COVID-19 aged 18 or older
 - Symptomatic children under 12
 - if the child's symptoms require a test in the opinion of a healthcare professional
 - the child lives in the same household or meets regularly with family members or persons aged 16 or older whose immune system is weakened
 - A home test shows positive for the coronavirus
 - and a formal quarantine decision is required