

## **Sickness absences and getting tested for COVID-19 – instructions for the students of upper secondary educational institutions and their guardians**

To prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, it is extremely important that students do not come to school while ill.

Typical symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, headache, nausea, diarrhoea, muscle ache, a sore throat, a runny nose, shortness of breath and the loss of sense of smell and taste. The only way to differentiate between the symptoms of COVID-19 and other viral diseases is a coronavirus test. Particularly in children and young people, the symptoms of COVID-19 are often mild and short-lasting.

If a student or their family member develops even mild symptoms indicative of COVID-19, they must get tested for the coronavirus without delay.

Residents of Helsinki can book an appointment for a coronavirus test by calling the coronavirus helpline, tel. 09 310 10024 (7–16 on weekdays) and the Medical Helpline, tel. 116 117, at other times.

Adult residents of Helsinki and young people who have personal online banking codes can also book an appointment for a coronavirus test by completing the online coronavirus symptoms check-up at Omaolo.fi. Residents of other municipalities must contact their municipality's health care services.

The person exhibiting symptoms must stay home at least until they receive their test results. Family members who do not have any symptoms can continue to go to school, daycare and work while waiting for the test results, unless there is a strong suspicion that the family member waiting for the test result is infected with COVID-19.

If the result of the coronavirus test is negative, you can return to the school once you are free of symptoms. Sometimes symptoms such as a runny nose or mild cough may persist for a long time following a respiratory infection. If you are otherwise well, these types of mild symptoms should not prevent you from returning to school as long as your test result is negative and your symptoms are clearly getting better.

If symptoms reappear or increase later, you will need to get tested again.

If the result of the coronavirus test is positive, your entire family must stay at home. In this case, further instructions will be provided by health care services.

It is important to bring any asthma or allergy symptoms that students may have under control with effective medication. However, you don't need to be absent from school based on these types of mild, long-term symptoms if they are typical for you. That being said, you should not hesitate to get tested for the coronavirus if you feel that your symptoms include symptoms of infection.

Students who are known to suffer from migraines or stress-related stomach aches, for example, do not need to be absent from school based on these types of familiar, long-term symptoms. If your symptoms change, however, do not hesitate to get tested for COVID-19.

It is important to also prevent the spread of other infectious diseases besides COVID-19 so that there is enough testing capacity to get everyone with symptoms tested.

Epidemiologic operations  
City of Helsinki