



Guidelines for kindergartens and childcare institutions in connection with the spread of COVID-19

- COVID-19 is an infectious viral disease which spreads from person to person by means of the projection of aerosols, mainly through coming into close contact with infectious persons.*
- If conditions are favourable, the virus can survive on contaminated surfaces for up to three days, but it can be destroyed through cleaning and disinfection.
- The risk of the spread of COVID-19 is at its highest in enclosed, crowded, and poorly ventilated rooms.
- The purpose of these guidelines is to issue guidelines for kindergartens and childcare institutions in terms of the prevention of the spread COVID-19.

General information and advice

- As a rule, the course of COVID-19 is very mild in children and, therefore, even closer attention must be paid to monitoring children's health in order to identify symptoms of the disease.
- If a child develops symptoms of a viral upper respiratory tract infection (cough, head cold, sore throat, fever, generally feeling poorly, unusual tiredness), they must stay at home and their family physician or the family physician advisory line (phone number: 1220) must be contacted as soon as possible to receive further instructions.
- A child may attend kindergarten with a mild head cold or cough if that child has just recovered from a seasonal infectious disease and is feeling well in general, but still suffers from mild residual cough or head cold. If it is unclear whether or not the child is infectious, the child's local family health centre should be consulted.
- Chronic diseases, such as asthma or allergies, may cause the symptoms of a cough or head cold, but it will not usually be necessary for the child to stay at home due to such conditions. As a rule, chronic diseases have already been diagnosed and, if necessary, the parent can write a note for the child in which they can provide confirmation that the child's symptoms are not infectious. No separate medical certificate is issued for a chronic disease.
- Kindergartens and childcare institutions should, if necessary, plan in advance to designate which room they can use to isolate a child who is suspected of having been infected. Those children who have been placed in isolation must still be supervised.
- Current advice is that soft toys that have been brought from home should be used only during a child's nap time, and not for general play.
- Current advice is also that any gatherings that have been planned for children and employees who do not come into contact in a daily basis should now be cancelled, including Christmas parties.
- If composite groups are being organised at the kindergarten (in the form of, for instance, groups which include older and younger children together), such groups should always be composed of the same children. The purpose of this is to ensure that the circle of close contacts for the children remains as stable as possible.*
- At kindergartens and childcare institutions with a separate outdoor playground area or other such facilities, children should stay outdoors as much as possible, with classes also being held outdoors. Kindergartens and childcare institutions with no outdoor playground area or other such facilities must ensure the protection of both children and employees from infection when going outdoors (including the avoidance of close contact with other individuals).
- If a child returns from a high-risk foreign country in which the number of infections is above the agreed limit, the child must self-isolate for two weeks or get tested for SARS-CoV-2 immediately after returning from such a country:
 - if the test result is negative, the child must self-isolate for seven days;
 - a repeat test must be carried out at least seven days after learning of the results of the first test;



- if the results from the second SARS-CoV-2 test are also negative, the child may return to their normal life;
- if the results are positive, the child must contact their family physician and self-isolate.

Further information for those individuals who have fallen ill can be found [here](#).

Those individuals who are returning from foreign countries will find updated information about the infection rates in various foreign countries and about applicable restrictions to their freedom of movement by visiting the [website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

The cleanliness of the premises and proper ventilation

- Any unnecessary objects must be removed from a room which is to be used for isolation purposes: the surfaces, floor, and walls of the room must be easy to clean and disinfect.
- It must be ensured that air that is mechanically supplied and removed in the form of a ventilation system is in fact supplied through a system that is fully functional and which has been switched on. The requirements of regulation No 8 by the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of 2 April 2020 on the [further requirements for the ventilation and aeration of a social welfare institution building or a non-residential building during the state of emergency](#) must be followed.
- As of 24 November 2020, COVID-19, officially referred to as SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2), is included in hazard group 3 of biological hazards. In the case of any work that is accompanied by a risk of coming into contact with biological hazards, the employer must determine the type, extent, and duration of the risk to the employee of their being infected during the course of carrying out the working environment risk analysis and, based on this, assess the risk towards the employee's health, and implement necessary precautionary measures. [The precautions are introduced on the Labour Inspectorate's 'Tööelu' website](#).
- Premises should be cleaned as usual, but at least once a day. During the course of cleaning operations, all benches and desks, door handles, dining tables, etc, must be washed by using appropriate detergents and disinfectants (see the links below).
- The detergents and disinfectants must be kept in a locked cabinet or room. The user instructions that are provided on the label must always be followed when using disinfectants; this will ensure the safety of the product for those people who will come into contact with the surfaces in the future. Unregistered or unchecked disinfectants may not actually have any disinfectant properties. They may not protect the user and must therefore not be used.
- Furniture, shelves, and radiators must be wiped down with a damp cloth at least twice a week.
- The equipment and surfaces in toilet facilities must be cleaned and disinfected every day.
- Toys must be washed when necessary and by following the procedure which has been established at the kindergarten.
- Toilets must be equipped with a sufficient amount of soap and with foot-operated waste baskets.
- Teachers should make sure that children are taught the following points:

Hygiene requirements which must be followed by children as well as teachers

- not to use spectacles, bottles, spoons, etc, which in fact belong to other children
- to cover their nose and mouth with their arm or a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- to dispose of used tissues immediately and to wash their hands with soap and water
- to avoid touching their faces or rubbing their eyes with unwashed hands
- to wash their hands frequently and advisably for between 15-20 seconds. Teachers should demonstrate to the children how to wash one's hands properly
- if possible, hands should be dried with a paper towel
- only personal (disposable or reusable) mugs or cups should be used for drinking water; this is necessary to ensure the prevention of any spread of head colds, coughs, and other infectious diseases. Children



should keep their personal mugs or cups in their lockers or in a place that has been agreed with the teacher.

- Hands must always be washed when coming in from outdoors, before eating, and after using the toilet. Otherwise, hands should be washed immediately after getting them dirty.
- Physical contact must be avoided, especially with children or adults who cough or sneeze. If you are standing too close to such children or adults, you may breathe in droplets of the virus in the air after the infected person has sneezed, with the result that you may also fall ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands. Your hands are continually coming into contact with various objects or surfaces which may be contaminated with the virus.
- Avoid infecting others. When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with your arm or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue into a waste basket and wash your hands. Covering the mouth and nose prevents the spread of germs and viruses. If you use your bare hand to cover your mouth and nose when sneezing, you may spread germs and viruses to other people and objects which you then touch. If it is not possible to use a tissue, turn your face away from others when you cough or sneeze - never cough or sneeze on others.
- [Various relevant instructions are available on the Health Board's website.](#)

If a child develops symptoms at kindergarten or a childcare institution:

- An employee of the institution must immediately contact the child's parent or guardian and ask them to pick up the child as soon as possible.
- The child must be temporarily isolated until they are picked up by their parent or guardian. It is important to avoid frightening the child in the course of isolating them. The importance of isolation must be explained to any child who has fallen ill, as well as to other children in the group, in a comprehensible and supportive manner.
- If the child's condition deteriorates significantly before the arrival of the parent or guardian, immediately contact the emergency services via the 112 number.
- The number of individuals who come into contact with a child who is suspected to have fallen ill must be minimised.
- Any premises, surfaces, and objects which are in public use (such as door handles, waste baskets, mixer taps, tables, etc) must immediately be cleaned with detergent and disinfectant.
- Any waste which may have been contaminated with the virus (such as tissues, masks, etc) should be disposed of pursuant to the following instructions: www.envir.ee/et/uudised/koroonajaatmed-tuleb-teistest-eemal-hoida.
- Parents and guardians should immediately consult the child's family physician.
- From the perspective of slowing down the spread of COVID-19, it is important that the parent or guardian of any child who has fallen ill notifies the kindergarten of their child's COVID-19 diagnosis having been confirmed.
- The kindergarten or childcare institution must also notify the parents or guardians of other children who are attending the kindergarten or institution of the test result. The child's privacy must be kept in mind when drawing up any notification, ensuring that a name or other details which may make it possible to identify a child who has fallen ill not being disclosed.
- If a child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the child's group at kindergarten or in the childcare institution must be closed. Those children (belonging to the same group as the child who has fallen ill) and employees who have come into close contact with the child who has fallen ill must self-isolate for a period of fourteen days or until they have tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 at least ten days after the contact.* When self-isolating with a child, the child's parents or guardian must avoid physical contact between the child and themselves with other families. This includes preventing any play with other children and visiting crowded places. Any contact with the elderly (such as grandparents) and/or



individuals who suffer from chronic diseases and who are included in risk groups must also be prevented.

- Other groups at the kindergarten or childcare institution may continue following their normal daily routine. Employees of the kindergarten or institution and parents and guardians must keep an eye on the health of the children and on their own health. In the event of any symptoms being detected, the family physician or the family physician advisory line (1220) must be called immediately.

**If an employee falls ill with a respiratory disease
(fever, cough, lack of energy, and other symptoms)**

- An employee who falls ill outside of working hours must stay at home.
- An employee who falls ill at work must leave immediately.
- The employee must contact their family physician who will determine whether or not that person should be diagnosed with COVID-19, plus their need to be tested, and the need for a certificate to be signed to show their incapacity for work.
- From the perspective of slowing down the spread of COVID-19, it is important for any employee who has fallen ill to notify their employer of their COVID-19 diagnosis being confirmed. The employer must be notified in a manner which has been agreed between the employee and the employer.
- Having been notified of an employee's COVID-19 diagnosis, the employer must cooperate with the regional department of the Health Board to identify the employee's work-related close contacts and to provide them instructions for the further organisation of their work.
- Any premises which may have been contaminated with the virus must be closed to third parties and should be cleaned, disinfected, and ventilated before reopening.
- [The advice of the Health Board in terms of cleaning and disinfection](#) should be followed.
- If a diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed, the employer must identify all persons who have come into close contact with the employee who has fallen ill at their place of work within the period after the employee has become symptomatic or up to two days before they became symptomatic.* In the case of an asymptomatic employee, anyone who has come into close contact with the employee within two days before they tested negative are deemed to be classed as the employee's close contacts.* The employer must cooperate with the regional department of the Health Board to determine close contacts.
- Close contacts must monitor their health carefully and should self-isolate for at least fourteen days or until they have received a negative SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result at least ten days after the contact.* Remaining employees may continue to carry out their daily duties, but should also keep an eye on their health.
- If the COVID-19 diagnosis is not confirmed for an employee who has fallen ill, all other employees may continue to carry out their duties, but must monitor their health over the following fourteen days.

HANDS MUST BE WASHED:

- before commencing work
- before handling heat-treated or ready-made food
- after handling or preparing food which was not heat-treated
- after handling waste
- after carrying out cleaning operations
- after using the toilet
- after blowing one's nose, sneezing, or coughing

***CLOSE CONTACT IS CLASSED AS BEING:**

- direct physical contact with an individual who has been infected with COVID-19 (such as shaking hands)
- direct contact without any protection with secretions from the respiratory tract of a person who has been infected with COVID-19 (such as being coughed on)



- after eating, drinking, or smoking
- after handling cash
- being within a distance of up to two metres of a person who has been infected with COVID-19 for at least fifteen minutes

Information materials for the prevention of viruses:

- [The Health Board's coronavirus website](#)
- [Explanatory material about coronavirus in children](#)
- [Information from the website of the Ministry of Education and Research](#)