

To Parents and Carers of Pupils at Harrow Schools

6 October 2020

### **Covid-19 and seasonal coughs and colds**

As children return to school and we move towards winter, we expect to see colds and other viral illnesses circulating. This year the Covid-19 infection is also expected to circulate.

You may have seen some debate about whether Covid-19 in children, particularly younger children, might cause symptoms other than the typical cough, fever and change in sense of taste and smell. I am writing to provide you with updated medical advice which I hope will help you decide when to keep your child away from school and when to request a test.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has just issued very helpful advice. The College Doctors reviewed the scientific evidence from the UK and international studies and have concluded that:

**Children with cold symptoms, in particular a runny nose or sore throat, who do not have a fever or cough or a change in their sense of taste and smell should, if otherwise well, be in school and should not be tested for Covid-19.**

My colleagues in the NHS in NW London have developed a simple flow chart which is attached at the end of this letter.

Tests should therefore only be requested for children or adults who have:

- **a high temperature**
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste**

If you or your child need to self-isolate because someone in the household has symptoms or because you have been in contact with a positive case, please do **not** request a test unless you or your child develops symptoms. A negative test during self isolation **does not** mean you can cut short self isolation. This is because the incubation period of the virus (the time between becoming infected and developing symptoms) can be up to 14 days.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health also concluded that:

- children, particularly those of primary school age and younger, are less likely to become infected with coronavirus
- children generally have a much milder illness than adults
- children transmit the virus less easily than adults.

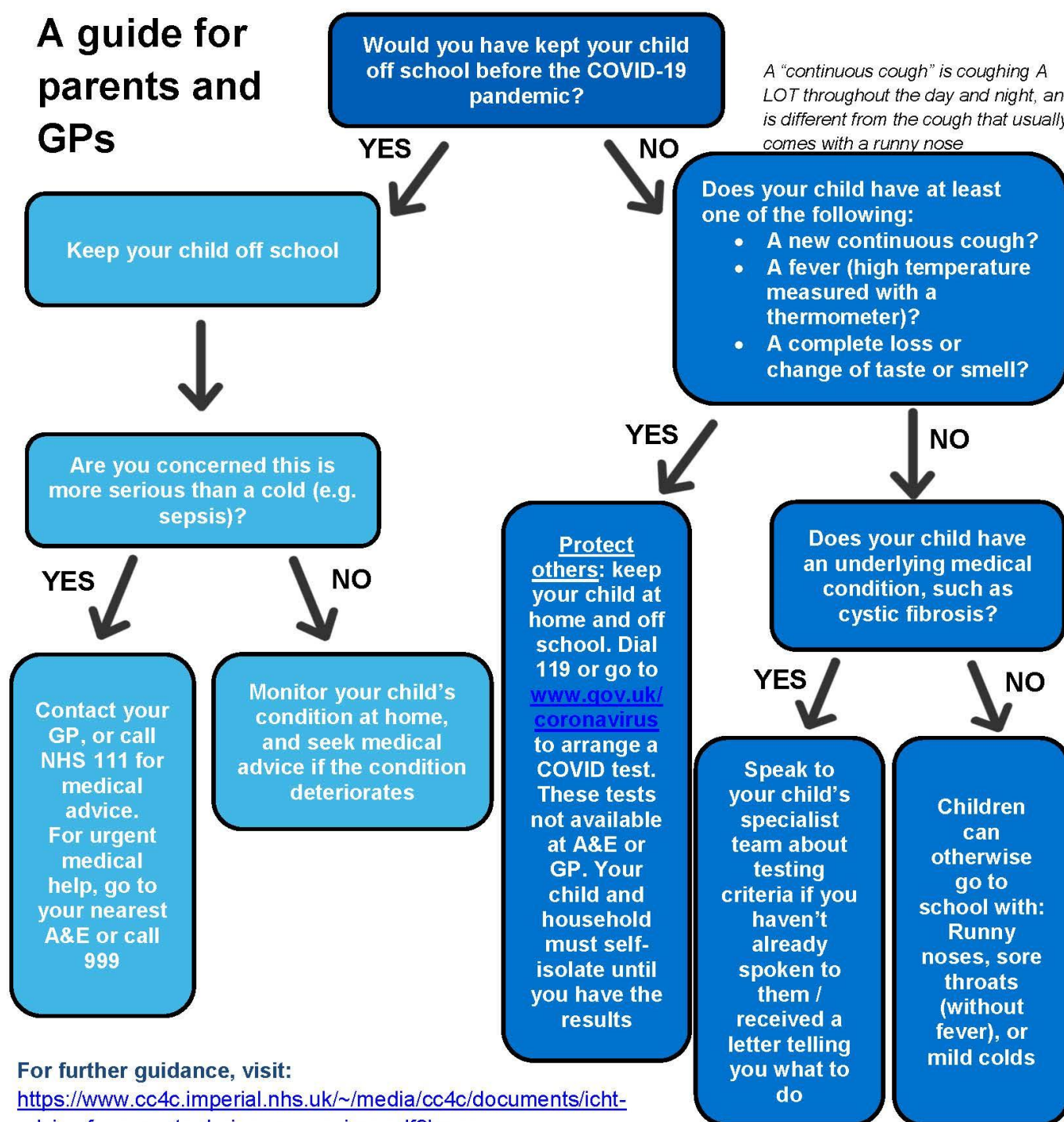
Yours faithfully



**Carole Furlong**  
Director of Public Health  
Harrow Council

# Should I send my child to school?

A guide for  
parents and  
GPs



For further guidance, visit:  
<https://www.cc4c.imperial.nhs.uk/~media/cc4c/documents/icht-advice-for-parents-during-coronavirus.pdf?la=en>

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