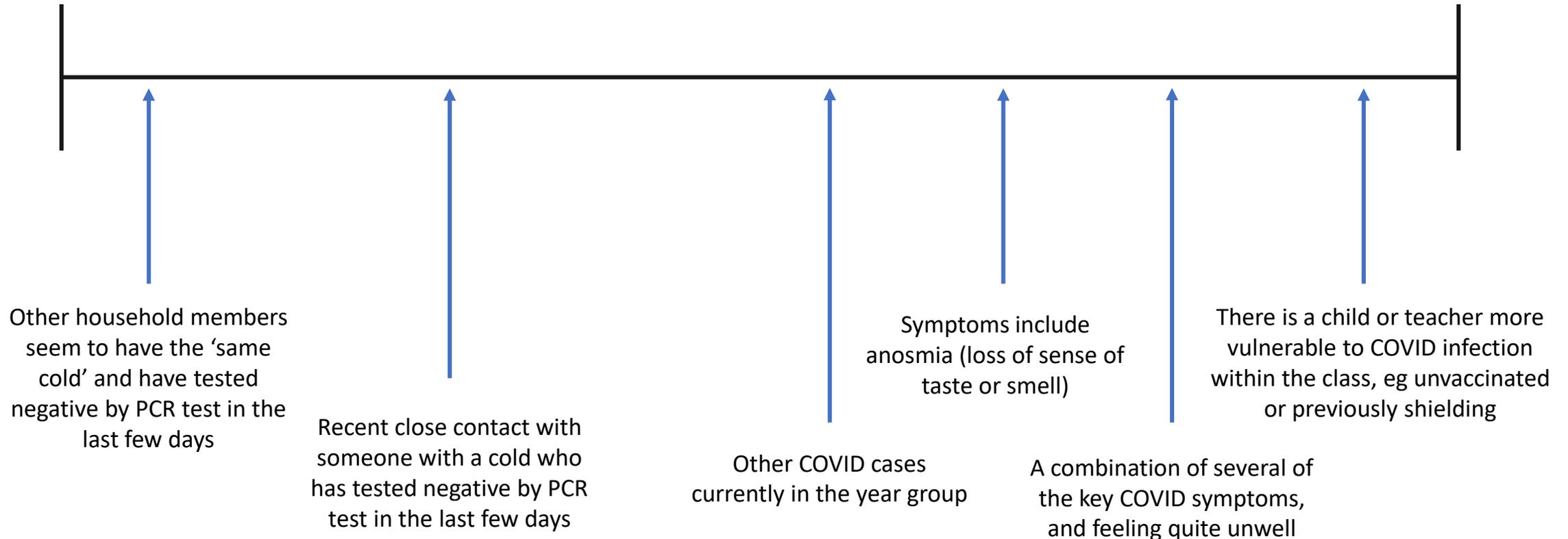


Assessing if a child with mild cold-like symptoms should attend school whilst waiting for a PCR test

Less risk if the child attends

More risk if the child attends



COVID or Cold? Some hints and tips

Many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are now the same as a regular cold, especially for people who have received two doses of the vaccine, making it hard to tell the difference.

At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, the main distinguishing symptoms of COVID-19 were thought to be fever, cough and loss of smell (anosmia), often known as the 'classic three or triad'. But there are more than 20 recognised symptoms of COVID-19, and over the past 18 months the pattern of symptoms has changed as the virus has evolved and more people have been vaccinated.

Currently, the most common COVID-19 symptoms in people who have been fully vaccinated are:

- Runny nose
- Headache
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell [\(anosmia\)](#)

The most common COVID-19 symptoms if you're unvaccinated, including children, are

- Headache
- Runny Nose
- Sore Throat
- Fever
- Persistent cough

Loss of smell (anosmia) or loss of taste is still one of the most important predictors of testing positive for COVID-19 rather than a regular cold, so it's an important symptom to look out for, whether you've been vaccinated or not.

A positive result from a lateral flow test is highly likely to be true. However, a negative result from a lateral flow test is not reliable enough to be sure you're definitely not infected, so if your symptoms persist it's best to get a PCR test to be sure.