

Quick Guide for School Staff

SUMMER COLD VS. HAYFEVER

During the final months of term, pupils often present with symptoms such as sneezing, a runny nose, watery eyes, tiredness, and headaches. But are these symptoms caused by hay fever, a summer cold, or something else?

Summer cold symptoms in children and teenagers

- **Sore throat:**
Younger pupils may complain of pain when swallowing or refuse food.
- **Runny nose that changes over time:**
Starts clear and watery, typically becomes thicker after a couple of days.
- **Sneezing and coughing:**
Sneezing is usually less intense and less frequent than with hayfever. Coughing is common and can linger, particularly in younger children.
- **Fever:**
More likely in younger children; teenagers may have little or no temperature.
- **Body aches and general discomfort :**
Children may seem tearful, irritated, or reluctant to participate. Teenagers may describe feeling "run down".
- **Loss of appetite:**
Particularly common in primary-age children.

Good to know:

Symptoms of a summer cold worsen before improving (they typically peak around days 2-3 and resolve within 7-10 days).

Because hayfever does not cause a fever, if a pupil has a raised temperature alongside cold-like symptoms, a viral infection is far more likely than an allergic reaction.