

**Coronavirus**  
**Frequently Asked Questions for School Based Employees**  
**Number 1**

**Question:**

When should staff and students stay away from School after potential exposure to Coronavirus?

**Answer:**

Schools are under a duty to protect the health and well-being of those employed at and studying at the school. Students and staff should not be admitted to the school where this would conflict with the NHS advice on, for example self-isolation after return to the UK from travel abroad.

The current NHS advice is that individuals should stay at home for 7 days when:

They have a high temperature – they feel hot to touch on their chest or back – or a new, continuous cough – this means they've started coughing repeatedly.

This will help to protect others in the community while they are infectious.

- Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
- Do not contact NHS 111 to tell them you are staying at home
- NHS are not testing people who are self-isolating with mild symptoms

If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.

**Question:**

What about pay and sick pay when absent from work?

**Answer:**

School employees covered by the Burgundy Book (Teachers) and Green Book (Support Staff) sick pay schemes are entitled to full pay for absence(s) when they are required to be absent due to infectious illness and this absence does not count against sick pay entitlements.

**Question:**

How do we code any sickness absence when an employee is absent due to the coronavirus?

**Answer:**

If employees have to self-isolate but are fit and well and can work from home they should record their hours using the normal processes. Should employee become ill as a result of the coronavirus they should follow normal sickness absence procedures. An additional field has been added to SAP specifically to record sickness absence related to coronavirus.

**Question:**

If staff are absent due to sickness due to coronavirus symptoms are they covered by the normal sickness notification requirements?

**Answer:**

If an employee is sick due to coronavirus they should self-certificate for the first 7 days and produce a medical certificate from their GP for any further absence.

**Question:**

What is the position in relation to medical confidentiality when an employee is diagnosed with Coronavirus?

**Answer:**

The overriding duty is to protect the Health and Safety of employees, pupils and others for example agency staff, parents, contractors and governors. In some cases you may be able to achieve this without naming the infected employee, but in many other cases it may be necessary to name an infected employee, even without their consent. The advice of Public Health England should always be followed in this respect.

**Question:**

What action should be taken by school in respect of pregnant employees?

**Answer:**

The Local Authority is currently looking at how we support those who have been defined as being vulnerable by the government, particularly those who are over 70, have underlying health conditions that mean they require the flu jab, are pregnant and/or have relatives at home who may be in a vulnerable group. Further advice will be issued in the coming days but in the meantime you are encouraged to be particularly vigilant about social distancing.

**Question:**

Can I use Teaching Assistants to replace absent teaching employees?

**Answer:**

Currently, support staff should not be used to directly replace teachers. However, some teaching assistants may carry out limited teaching activities commensurate with their role profile, including delivering lessons, provided they are doing so in order to assist or support the work of a qualified teacher in the school. Such work should be subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher in accordance with arrangements made by the Head teacher to ensure that they are effectively monitored. The Head teacher should also be satisfied that the member of support staff has the skills, expertise and experience to carry out the specified work.

**Question:**

Can I call in people who are part time and not usually working that day to cover employees who are absent?

**Answer:**

It is anticipated that employees will work flexibly and co-operatively. You can offer them the opportunity to work extra hours to support the school and the wider community, but you cannot require them to do this.

**Question:**

Employees have asked if they can bring their children into school with them due to their children's school being closed. Is this permissible?

**Answer:**

School employees are likely to be identified as key workers and therefore arrangements are being put in place to ensure their children can attend at their normal school.

**Question:**

A Teaching Assistant who specifically supports an SEND pupil has confirmed they are self-isolating, what do I do?

**Answer:**

You should establish if there are any suitable alternative members of staff that are willing and able to carry out these duties. Complete a risk assessment to determine the health, safety and wellbeing of the pupil and staff members. If there are no alternative provisions you will need to contact the pupil's parents to discuss the matter and advise them that unfortunately, whilst the school will remain open, you are not adequately able to provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of the pupil and therefore you ask that the parents keep their child at home.

**Question:**

What about employees on sick leave for something other than coronavirus?

**Answer:**

Follow normal procedures. Employees who are absent due to sickness (not related to Coronavirus) are able to self-certify for the first seven days and should then provide the necessary certification from their GP.

**Question:**

Can I reallocate the work of staff who are self-isolating or absent to other staff?

**Answer:**

In some cases employees may be willing to carry out the work where it will assist in maintaining essential services. Any request, of course, needs to be made sensitively and no pressure must be put on the employee to cover. Schools need to balance their statutory duty to provide education with the need to engender goodwill amongst remaining staff.

PPA - It is written into the School Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document that PPA time is a contractual entitlement and cannot be used for the purposes of cover. Only in a genuine emergency should a teacher be required to give up PPA time to cover a class and in such circumstances should be given compensatory PPA time in lieu as soon as possible.

Schools could chose to run 'activity days' where the usual timetable is suspended and enrichment activities take place in the school hall. This allows larger numbers of students to be supervised more efficiently with fewer school staff.

**Question:**

What happens to employees if we close the school?

**Answer:**

Schools are being required to stay open for the most vulnerable pupils and children of key workers and they should work with the LA if they are struggling to do so.

Where a school is closed to all or some pupils you should make your expectations clear to available staff so that there are no misunderstandings about attendance at work. You will need to consider how you will manage employees who are available to work. You may be able to agree alternative working arrangements for example, alternative venue, working from home or working additional hours to make up for lost hours.

**Question:**

If schools are closed, can staff be asked to work from home?

**Answer:**

We support the Government's advice on people working from home where they are able to do so. If an employee's role enables them to work from home they should talk to their Line manager/ Headteacher. These discussions should take place as soon as possible.

**Question:**

If schools are closed what happens to any supply or agency staff?

**Answer:**

Supply or agency staff are engaged to work in the school when there is work available for them to do. If there is no work for them to do they will not be required and they will not be paid. It is recognised that this may not be straightforward and therefore we advise that schools contact the schools HR advisory team for advice and guidance.

**Question:**

What will happen in relation to an employee during a self-isolation period?

**Answer:**

If an employee is advised that they need to self-isolate or are sent home as a precaution, they need to discuss the reasons for self-isolation in the first instance with their Line manager/Headteacher.

As part of this discussion, Head teachers should establish the following:

- the reason for self-isolation
- whether the employee is fit and able to work from home
- the start and end period of self-isolation
- a daily contact approach between the line manager and the employee including confirmed contact details and any support the colleague may require during the self-isolation period (for example, support in obtaining medication supplies)

If an employee is fit and able to they should be asked to work from home during the self-isolation period, as far as it is possible to do so. Schools are advised to maintain a local record of those staff who are self-isolating together with the reason and the duration.

The employee should record their hours via the normal processes. Line managers or Head teachers must be in contact with any self-isolating employee on a daily basis to support their wellbeing and ensure they are able to perform their duties. This contact will be by phone unless there is a clear reason why text or email should be used.

**Question:**

Maintaining contact with your employees in all circumstances?

**Answer:**

Employees should ensure that they are taking steps to look after their wellbeing during their period of working from home. This includes:

- maintaining regular contact with their manager and colleagues
- taking regular breaks
- avoiding being “always on” by ensuring that they identify non-working time
- contacting the Derbyshire Counselling Service if they need support; Contact 01629 536954
- being aware of the things that can cause them poor wellbeing and the activities and resources that can help to address this

**Question:**

Employees who refuse to attend for work?

**Answer:**

If difficulties arise with a refusal to attend for work or a refusal to carry out certain duties, Line Managers or Headteachers should ascertain what the concerns are, consider what, if anything, can be reasonably addressed and do so, and encourage the individual to work.

If this has been done, but the individual still refuses to attend or perform the task then this may constitute unauthorised absence or part performance, (for example, where they are only prepared to carry out certain tasks or duties and not their full job descriptions or requirements) which may be a disciplinary issue and following disciplinary action may justify pay being stopped. The manager should explain the individual's contractual obligations and the consequences of refusing to work, and if there is still no change in the individual's position, immediate advice should be sought from you HR provider to ensure an appropriate and consistent approach can be taken.

**Question:**

If an employee is supported to work from home but have to work their hours outside of normal working hours due to caring responsibilities how will these be managed?

**Answer:**

Any decision regarding alternative working arrangements will need to be agreed with the Line manager or Headteacher.