

# Coronavirus

## Frequently asked Questions for school-based employees

### Number 9

**Question 1:**

How does the latest national lockdown impact on my clinically extremely vulnerable staff?

**Answer:**

Some employees are defined, on medical grounds, as [clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus](#) – that is, people with specific serious health conditions. Over this period, the Government are advising the employees who are defined as clinically extremely vulnerable to work from home. If they cannot work from home, they are advised not to go to work. Individuals in this group will be identified through a letter from the NHS or from their GP. They may have been advised to shield in the past. Schools are advised to organise for any employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable to be paid as normal and work from home, where possible, during the period of national restrictions.

**Question 2:**

How can I support a member of staff who is pregnant?

**Answer:**

Pregnant women including pregnant women who are 28 weeks and beyond are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category and should take particular care to follow the preventative measures. Schools are reminded that they must have a risk assessment in place for any pregnant women and this should consider any additional measures required because of COVID-19.

**Question 3:**

Should staff who are pregnant or vulnerable but not in the most vulnerable health group be asked to attend?

**Answer:**

Employees who are pregnant or have health conditions which make them vulnerable to being badly affected if they catch the virus should be avoided on staff rotas for working in school, if at all possible. They will be able to support in other ways which should be discussed with them e.g. assisting with the schools remote learning strategy.

**Question 4:**

Is there any further guidance available that will enable me to support staff who need to be protected more than other colleagues e.g. BAME and clinically vulnerable employees?

**Answer:**

Schools should review the individual risk-assessments of staff who are at potentially greater risk and make appropriate amendments accordingly.

This should be included as part of the conversation with the individuals.

**Question 5:**

Should staff who live with someone who is “shielding” be asked to attend?

**Answer:**

Employees who live with someone in the most vulnerable health groups, as set out in the guidance on shielding can be included on staff rotas for working in school if absolutely necessary – head teachers should determine where the capacity allows for these employees to work from home and should enable this as far as possible.

**Question 6:**

I have asked staff to be flexible. They are refusing, but I don't have any of the work they normally do available for them?

**Answer:**

Staff are being asked to be flexible in the work that they do. Any requests to undertake different work should be voluntary and commensurate to the grading of their post. Individuals should be suitably reassured and supported including any necessary training to undertake any new duties.

**Question 7:**

What can I expect staff who do attend to do?

**Answer:**

A minimum number of staff should be on the school site. Only staff working directly with students or key to opening, cleaning, or involved in the testing regime should be on the school site. Teachers and other classroom based staff should not be asked to be on site if they are not looking after pupils.

**Question 8:**

How should I organise staff?

**Answer:**

When considering who you'll need in school, you should identify what key roles you need every day. Roles that you will need to consider will include a member of SLT, a first aider, a DSL (or deputy DSL).

If necessary, the DSL can just be available for staff to contact via phone or online video rather than on site you are able to share DSLs (or deputies) with other schools if needed. **Note:** if there's no DSL or deputy on site, you'll also need a senior leader to take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

In addition you will need to determine how many teachers and/or teaching assistants you need for the number of pupils you have in.

Teaching assistants can supervise children and deliver lessons, so long as you're satisfied they're competent enough to do so.

You'll need to update individual risk assessments for staff at a higher risk of coronavirus and identify who can come into school.

This will enable you to produce and share a staffing rota. This rota may need to be reviewed if circumstances change e.g. if a member of staff scheduled to attend has to self-isolate.

For staff that will be working from home your expectations should be outlined together with the support you'll provide. It is important to maintain regular contact with those staff working from home.

**Question 9:**

Who are the critical workers?

**Answer:**

There is not a precise list of role definitions, rather an outline of what types of work could lead to someone being deemed a critical worker - please see [link](#).

**Question 10:**

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/Headteachers should ascertain what the concerns are, consider what, if anything, can be reasonably addressed and do so, and encourage the individual to attend work. As a last resort they should be provided with work to undertake work from home or redeployed.

**Question 11:**

If an employee is supported to work from home but has 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 in advance with the Line manager/ Headteacher.

**Question 12:**

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.



**Need to talk?**

**Emotional support for education staff  
in uncertain times**

**Helpline:**  
08000 562561  
[educationsupport.org.uk/helpline](https://educationsupport.org.uk/helpline)

 Education Support

**Question 13:**

Is the Government’s Job Retention Scheme “Furlough” available for school-based employees?

**Answer:**

Whilst the Government has confirmed that Local Authorities are able to access the scheme, it should be noted that their expectation is that public sector organisations will not do so except in certain exceptional circumstances.

Organisations receiving public money to assist in the response to Covid-19 **are not** expected to furlough. The latest DfE guidance acknowledges that schools may have a separate private income stream that has reduced or stopped altogether. Where there is a workforce that typically work on activities relating to private income streams it may be possible to furlough these staff, in some cases. If you would like any further information please contact your HR provider.