

Tuesday 18 March 2020

What you need to know

1. The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of:
 - A high temperature (37.8 or above - you feel hot to touch on your chest or back) or
 - a new, continuous cough (this means you've started coughing repeatedly)
2. Staff or pupils who are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms should stay at home for 7 days if they live alone or 14 days if they live with others. Once they are well, and if before the end of the 7/14 day period, they should contact their Headteacher / School / line manager to make arrangements to work from home. You must not return to school without discussing the arrangement first.
3. If someone in the same household has symptoms of Covid-19, but the staff member is well, then they should make arrangements with their Headteacher to work from home for a period of 14 days and seek further medical advice.
4. For anyone in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.
5. For those who are well or become well during the 7/14 day period then contact must be made with their Headteacher / School / line manager to make arrangements to work from home.
6. Staff and pupils who have come into contact with someone who has a confirmed case of Covid-19 or have recently returned from one of the significantly affected areas, should stay at home and work from home if well, for 14 days.
7. When a member of staff/pupil contacts you regarding the stay at home guidance, there are some key questions to ask before escalating for a confirmed decision:
 - What are your specific symptoms?
 - Have you sought medical advice?
 - Do you live alone?
 - Are you living with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19 virus?
 - Do you have an underlying medical condition?
 - Have you sought medical advice (GP or Consultant). The online NHS 111 service is not considered medical advice in this scenario.
 - Are you pregnant?
 - Have you sought medical advice (GP, midwife or Consultant). The online NHS 111 service is not considered medical advice in this scenario.
 - Do you live with someone over 70 years of age?
 - Do you live with someone who has an underlying medical condition(s).
 - Have you recently returned from one of the following areas or been in contact with someone from one of these areas within the last 14 days?
 - Wuhan City and Hubei Province (China)
 - Daegu or Cheongdo (Republic of Korea)
 - Italy
 - Spain

- Iran
 - Have you recently been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of Covid-19 virus whilst they were experiencing the symptoms, within the last 14 days?
8. Once you have all the information by asking the questions above, all decisions relating to working from home or 'stay at home' will be made by Executive Directors Olivia Frings, Director of HR, or Ian Carnwell, Director of the Learning Environment . Only in the absence of either of these individuals should this be escalated to Dean Ashton, CEO. Please do not commit to any arrangements until you have confirmed this with the above individuals via either telephone or email.
9. The Trust will log all instances.
10. National guidance for staff on [Staying at Home](#) is available.

Working from home

11. The following groups of staff are now strongly advised to make arrangements with their Headteachers to work from home effective immediately and follow the Governments guidance on [Social Distancing](#) :
- Staff who are under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on **medical grounds**)
 - Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
 - Chronic neurological condition, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
 - Diabetes
 - Problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you had your spleen removed
 - A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
 - Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
 - Staff who are pregnant
 - Staff 65 and over
12. Please confirm these arrangements with Olivia Frings or Ian Carnwell before putting them into place.
13. In order to avoid additional pressure on an already stretched NHS, once the Covid-19 virus outbreak has subsided the Trust will follow up with each individual who is 'staying at home' or have made arrangements to work from home during the outbreak to confirm any and all of the underlying medical conditions. If a member of staff is able to provide this medical advice now then please arrange to send this to Olivia Frings, Director of HR at olivia.frings@reachsouth.org. Any member of staff declaring the need to 'stay at home' because of an associated underlying medical condition will (as we return to work as

normal at the end of the outbreak) be required to provide evidence to a Director from a medical professional that they do have the declared underlying medical condition. Anyone unable to provide this evidence may face disciplinary proceedings which could lead to dismissal.

What do we mean by working from home?

14. Normally, working from home means doing your job from home. However it is accepted that during the Covid-19 outbreak that it is not always possible to do the full duties of your role from home, especially if you work in a school setting. Therefore staff working from home will be expected to do their substantive role, wherever possible, and any reasonable task given to you by your line manager. This may include lesson planning, delivering google classroom sessions that may or may not be for your normal class year or group or even your school. We must remember that we work for a Multi Academy Trust and it is our professional responsibility to ensure all our schools are supported and remain open.
15. It is vital during this unprecedented time of uncertainty that we work to support both our colleagues and our pupils in doing our best to continue to deliver good quality education.
16. It is important that we support each other during this difficult time and that we remember that should our colleagues be 'staying at home' due to the impact of the Covid-19 virus that others will be bearing the additional workload.
17. Even if all schools are closed we need to try our best as a team to continue to deliver good quality education.

Recruitment

18. The Trust are starting to receive a number of calls from candidates attending interviews who are 'staying at home' or being asked by their medical professionals to limit social contact. This will include their ability to attend interviews.
19. Therefore we are asking all schools to do their best not to cancel interviews and to look into new ways of determining a candidates suitability. This will require a more creative approach to recruitment and the HR Team will work with you and support you to do this.
20. Where possible we would ask schools to do an initial telephone interview with those unable to attend to determine whether they should then be invited to an interview once their period of isolation has ended.
21. Whilst it is appreciated that this may delay appointments being made this does ensure that the Trust is still able to appoint the best people for its roles and ensures that once we return to 'business as usual' schools have an optimal workforce.
22. Where, in exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to do this then we would ask the school to develop plans to cancel interviews until the outbreak has subsided and produce contingency plans for once the school reopens.

Employment

23. During this uncertain time the Trust wants to assure staff that during their period of absence due to Covid-19, whether that be because staff are experiencing symptoms or whether they are having to 'stay at home', that their normal terms and conditions of service will apply.
24. Staff that are 'staying at home' due to experiencing symptoms will be classed as sick and normal sick pay will apply dependent on their length of service.
25. Sickness absence targets and/or triggers will be suspended for all staff who have absence connected to the Covid-19 virus .
26. Should the school close home working arrangements will be put in place for staff by the school and monitored closely. Should this be the case you will receive your normal substantive salary. Again whilst at home you may be asked to carry out any reasonable task in support of the function of the Trust.
27. If school closures are instructed by an external authority it does not necessarily mean we will **all** be working from home. We will need to wait and see what the external authorities require of us.
28. Should the school close, staff who are unable to work from home, because for example they having caring responsibilities or who choose not to work from home will be allowed to request unpaid leave, or other leave such as unpaid parental leave. The normal process applies, but all requests will be looked on sensitively.
29. The Trust is working on a solution for casual workers who do not have a substantive role in the Trust and rely heavily on this income. Further advice will be provided shortly.
30. The Trust have today introduced a new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which will offer additional support in the form of 24/7 telephone support line for financial, legal and other support as well as counselling services. Further details of how staff can access this support will be made available within the next 48 hours.