



Staff absences - Coronavirus

17 Mar 2023

Updated 31 January 2025 with latest guidance: [Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19 - GOV.UK](#)

This replaces the guidance below.

The Government have issued new advice on social distancing for everyone in the UK. This includes in particular those who are pregnant and those who are at increased risk of severe illness from contracting the virus. That advice can be read here:

[Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults \(GOV.UK\)](#)

The advice is that staff who are known to be, or identify as being, in one of these at risk groups should adhere to social distancing measures (contained in the guidance).

Schools must allow staff who wish to self-isolate because of their age or health condition to do so and direct those who do not to remain at home.

New advice issued since Friday 20 March 2020 will see approx. 1.5 million people receive a letter to say that they must strictly isolate for 12 weeks. Where staff can work from home and they are not unwell then suitable arrangements can be made.

Colleagues are reminded of the provisions that already exist for teaching and support staff in schools in circumstances where they are required to self-isolate or are placed into quarantine.

All staff have national conditions which deal with the situation where staff are:

- Required to be absent from work
- Prevented from attending work or
- Asked to isolate from work

due to contact or potential contact with infectious disease.

In these circumstances staff should receive normal pay and the absence should not be reckonable towards entitlement under the sick pay scheme nor counted towards any absence management monitoring totals. For schools who use the ITrent system there is now an option to record self-isolation under 'other' absence.

Following government guidance, SSP - Statutory Sick Pay will be paid to all staff including AWRs from the first day of any Covid-19 related absence. It will also pay from the first day if it is a self-isolation absence due to the coronavirus.

If you use the Council's ITrent system then when you are recording sickness or self-isolation, the reason 'Epidemic/Pandemic infection must be selected. This will assist Payroll in identifying staff to be paid.

Please note the system will not pay the first three days unless it is related to the Epidemic/Pandemic.

Please email balogunl@ealing.gov.uk or genpayroll@ealing.gov.uk if you require further clarification.

It is possible that staff absent from work as set out above will not be able to provide a certificate or official document to confirm the course of action they have taken but will refer to either GOV.UK, NHS or PHE advice, which may be written or someone they spoke to. We would ask that, unless you have strong evidence to the contrary, you accept these on face value.

If a member of staff decides to self-isolate without taking advice from the authorities, please ask them to contact the NHS on 111 or their GP and take advice. Then ask the member of staff if they could contact you again once they have done this.

If staff are required to be absent from work and are either symptom free or only have mild symptoms, you can consider, if it is practical and possible, whether they can work from home for the period that they are absent and feeling well.

This advice covers staff on permanent or fixed term contracts, if you have staff on other contract types it may or may not apply, please contact us in HR to discuss.

As there are developments that affect this advice we will look to inform you as soon as possible. If you do have any concerns or questions about staffing absence please do not hesitate to contact us in schools HR.

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[HR policies and procedures](#)

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- Neutral
- No

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