

STAFFING IN SCHOOLS – December 2021 – ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE

| | CATEGORY | GUIDANCE | COMMENTS |
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| 1. | STAFF WHO ARE SYMPTOMATIC WITH COVID SYMPTOMS | <p>If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever>37.8 OR continuous cough OR loss of taste and / or smell), however mild:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform school that you have developed symptoms of COVID-19 • stay at home (self-isolate) and do not leave your house for 10 days from when your symptoms started • follow guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection • Get tested (access a test here) • Inform school of the test result <p>If you are still unwell after your 10 day self-isolation you should seek medical advice</p> <p>Where necessary please follow guidance on test and trace and managing a suspected or confirmed case in an education setting, see 5 below</p> <p>any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age.</p> <p>These staff should not be at school</p> | <p>Enter details of absence on ITrent system or your own HR system. When or if the member of staff feels well during this period then they can work from home.</p> <p>Testing is now available for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus. If the staff member is symptomatic, it is vitally important that they get tested, in accordance with government guidance and advice, for their own safety, welfare and wellbeing and also that of others who they may have come into contact with.</p> <p>The following groups of people can access priority testing through GOV.UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essential workers in England • anyone in England who has symptoms of coronavirus and lives with an essential worker <p>Guidance on testing is available here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested</p> <p>If staff member tests positive, follow guidance for category 3 (below). If staff member tests negative they should follow the relevant guidance on this flow chart with regards to returning to work</p> <p>Flowchart</p> <p>If you or others in your household have covid symptoms but cannot access testing, you must complete the self isolation period.</p> <p>All staff should be aware of the asymptomatic testing programme for schools and further information can be found on this link Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance Ealing Grid for Learning (egfl.org.uk)</p> |
| 2. | STAFF WHO HAVE A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD WHO IS SYMPTOMATIC WITH COVID SYMPTOMS | <p>From 16 August, you will not be required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are fully vaccinated | <p>Enter details of any absence on ITrent system or your own HR system. These staff, if they are asked to isolate by test and trace, can be asked to work from home if they are well.</p> <p>If the staff member develops symptoms themselves, they should follow guidance for category 1 (above).</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are below the age of 18 years 6 months • you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial • you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons <p>NHS Test and Trace will contact you to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you are not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible.</p> <p>Guidance on testing is available here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested</p> <p>This includes information on priority testing for essential workers</p> <p>If you develop symptoms of Covid 19 then follow guidance for number 1 above.</p> <p>any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age.</p> <p>These staff will not be at school if they are advised by test and trace to self isolate</p> | <p>If the staff member or a member of their household (including children) is symptomatic it is vitally important that they get tested, in accordance with government guidance and advice, for their own safety, welfare and wellbeing and also that of others who they may have come into contact with.</p> <p>If the household member tests negative please follow the relevant guidance (and refer to links for further advice) on this flow chart</p> <p>Flowchart</p> <p>If the household member tests positive, the staff member should follow guidance for category 4 (below). Please follow the guidance on the link below https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</p> |
| 3. | STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID 19 | <p>Follow Medical Advice, inform the school, and refer to the guidance below</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection</p> | <p>School to follow guidance in the flowchart shown in the adjoining column (what to do if there is a suspected or confirmed case)</p> <p>Inform Raj Chowdhury (ChowdhuryR@ealing.gov.uk or 07568 130165) or Steve Dunham (DunhamS@ealing.gov.uk or 07940 546 263) and the Council's public health team (publichealth@ealing.gov.uk).</p> <p>Staff who are not unwell may be able/agree to work from home if that is practicable</p> |

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| | | <p>Please follow guidance on test and trace and managing a suspected or confirmed case in an education setting.</p> <p>See also this flowchart if the member of staff was in school during the infectious period</p> <p>Flowchart</p> <p>Enter details of absence on ITrent system or your own HR system</p> <p>These staff should not be at school</p> | |
| 4. | STAFF WHO HAVE MEMBERS OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID 19 | <p>From 16 August, you will not be required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you are fully vaccinated • you are below the age of 18 years 6 months • you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial • you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons <p>NHS Test and Trace will contact you to let you know that you have been identified as a contact and check whether you are legally required to self-isolate. If you are not legally required to self-isolate, you will be provided with advice on testing and given guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Even if you do not have symptoms, you will be advised to have a PCR test as soon as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection | <p>Enter details of absence, if there is an absence, on ITrent system or your own HR system</p> <p>These staff, if they are required to self-isolate, can be asked to work from home</p> <p>In addition please follow the guidance on the link below https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the school and get tested if you develop symptoms yourself or if you are asked to do so as part of a wider testing scheme <p>Please follow guidance on test and trace and managing a suspected or confirmed case in an education setting, see 5 below</p> <p>any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age.</p> <p>These staff will not be at school if they are advised by test and trace to self isolate</p> | |
| 5. | STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SELF ISOLATE THROUGH THE TEST AND TRACE PROCESS (If they are a 'close contact' of a confirmed case of coronavirus) | <p>Staff who have been contacted by the NHS test and trace service should follow any guidance given to them by the test and trace service.</p> <p>Staff should let the test and trace service know if they meet any of the close contact self-isolation exemptions as set out in 4 above.</p> <p>any suspected or confirmed close contacts of the Omicron variant will be asked to isolate for 10 days regardless of vaccination status or age.</p> <p>These staff should not be at school</p> | <p>These staff can be asked, if well, to work from home</p> <p>For reference, please see flowchart on dealing with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid 19 in school</p> <p>Flowchart</p> |
| 6. | STAFF WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS BEING IN THE CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE (CEV) & SHIELDED GROUP | <p>Shielding for the CEV group was paused from 1 April 2021.</p> <p>From 19 July, social distancing measures have ended in the work-place and it is no longer necessary for the government to instruct people to work from home.</p> | <p>The shielded patient list (SPL) was extended earlier in the year to account for people who have been identified aged 16-69 with multiple risk factors that make them more vulnerable to Covid-19. The NHS confirmed that using a new Covid 19 risk assessment process that combines a number of factors including age, gender, ethnicity, BMI and specific health conditions and treatments, they identified individuals likely to become seriously unwell if they were to catch Covid-19. If an employee thinks that there are good clinical reasons why they should be added to the Shielded Patient List, they should discuss their concerns with their GP or hospital clinician.</p> |


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| | | <p>Schools should continue to review and monitor the arrangements and risk assessments they have in place for CEV staff.</p> <p>This should include regular discussions with CEV staff to ensure that any concerns they have about remaining in the workplace are addressed.</p> | <p>The latest guidance issued for the CEV group is shown on this link. This link provides a list of those who would be classified as CEV and confirms how those who are CEV can access support.</p> <p>Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> |
| 7. | STAFF WHO HAVE A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS BEING ON THE CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE & SHIELDED GROUP | <p>The latest Govt guidance is that these staff can attend the workplace.</p> | <p>These staff may continue to be anxious about the possibility of transmitting the virus if they attend the workplace and a sensitive and confidential discussion with them to understand their concerns and anxieties would be beneficial. These staff may feel that an individual risk assessment would be supportive and reassuring in allaying any concerns they have about continuing in the workplace.</p> <p>They should also be provided this link with information on how CEV people can be protected</p> <p>Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> |
| 8. | STAFF WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS BEING IN THE CLINICALLY VULNERABLE (CV) GROUP OR WHO HAVE A MEMBER OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD IN THE CLINICALLY VULNERABLE (CV) GROUP | <p>CV staff can continue to attend school. While in school they must follow the system of controls and measures that are in place to minimise the risks of transmission.</p> <p>The type of controls and measures that schools will be adopting can be found in this document Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Staff who live with those who are CV can attend the workplace but should ensure they maintain good prevention practice in the workplace and at home.</p> <p>See below specific guidance for staff who are pregnant.</p> | <p>If CV staff have concerns about continuing to attend the workplace a confidential and sensitive discussion may need to be held with them to understand their concerns and views. This may lead to a decision to undertake an individual risk assessment to help allay their concerns.</p> <p>Those staff who have a household member in the CV group may continue to be anxious about the possibility of transmitting the virus if they attend the workplace and a sensitive and confidential discussion with them to understand their concerns and anxieties would be beneficial.</p> |
| 9 | STAFF WHO ARE PREGNANT | <p>Pregnant staff and their employers should follow the advice in the Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees</p> | <p>The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RCOG) has published occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women. We advise employers and pregnant women to consider this advice and to continue to monitor for future updates to it.</p> |

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| | <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-pregnant-employees</p> <p>This document continues to provide advice for women under two sections – up to 28 weeks pregnant and no underlying medical conditions or 28 weeks plus pregnant or an underlying medical condition. Please provide a copy of or access to this document for pregnant employees. It is essential that a risk assessment is conducted as soon as the school are informed that an employee is pregnant as set out below. Schools may wish to consider an input from the OH team or, depending on circumstances, the employee's own medical adviser. Please remember special consideration needs to be given to any underlying medical condition that the employee has (which may put them at risk of more severe illness if they contracted Covid) and medical advice may be needed to ascertain how any underlying condition impacts on the outcome of the risk assessment.</p> <p>We then advise that the risk assessment is monitored regularly during the course of the employee's pregnancy.</p> <p>At about 24 weeks a further risk assessment must be undertaken to take account of the advice detailed above for women who are 28 weeks + pregnant. You should note that the advice sets out that:</p> <p><i>Your employer should ensure you are able to adhere to any active national guidance on social distancing.</i></p> <p><i>For many workers, this may require working flexibly from home in a different capacity.</i></p> <p><i>All employers should consider both how to redeploy these staff and how to maximise the potential for homeworking, wherever possible.</i></p> | <p>If as a result of conducting a risk assessment or as a result of concerns raised about the woman's health or pregnancy, then we would expect the woman's GP or clinician to provide a medical opinion confirming if the employee is fit to return to work.</p> <p>If the GP says the employee can only work from home and the school cannot give them work to do from home or provide any other suitable alternative work, then effectively the employee ends up on medical suspension relating to their pregnancy (on full pay) until circumstances change or maternity leave starts. Please talk to your HR adviser in these circumstances.</p> <p>The two risk assessments are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The standard risk assessment an employer would carry out for any worker that confirms that she is pregnant – this is available on the Egfl on this link - https://www.egfl.org.uk/facilities/health-and-safety/new-expectant-mothers 2. The individual Covid risk assessment that is conducted for staff – this is available on the September opening page of egfl (https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus) under the heading "individual risk assessment and support plan template" <p>So effectively the first RA is something that would be completed for all workers who confirm they are pregnant (e.g. regardless of Covid) and the second RA is Covid related and applies to pregnant women given their clinically vulnerable status</p> <p>As part of your risk assessment, you should consider whether adapting duties and/or facilitating home working may be appropriate to mitigate risks.</p> <p>Schools should also take action to review risk assessments where they are notified that a woman is breastfeeding or has given birth within the last 6 months</p> |
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| | | <p>Pregnant women are in the 'clinically vulnerable' category, and are generally advised to follow the advice which applies to all clinically vulnerable staff in schools. All pregnant women should take particular care to practise frequent thorough hand washing, and cleaning of frequently touched areas in their home or workspace, and follow the measures and controls introduced by their school to minimise the risks of transmission.</p> <p>In some cases, pregnant women may also have other health conditions that mean they are considered CEV, where the advice for clinically extremely vulnerable staff will apply</p> <p>For advice on vaccination for those pregnant or breastfeeding please see information on this link COVID-19 vaccination: a guide for all women of childbearing age, pregnant or breastfeeding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> | |
| 10. | STAFF WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO ATTEND WORK DUE TO ANXIETY FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY RELATED TO COVID 19 AND WHO MAY OTHERWISE BE AT INCREASED RISK FROM COVID 19 | <p>Some people with particular characteristics may be at comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19). These staff can attend school as long as the system of controls set out in this guidance (Schools coronavirus (COVID-19) operational guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) are in place. The reasons for the disparities are complex and there is ongoing research to understand and translate these findings for individuals in the future.</p> <p>Further information is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drivers-of-the-higher-covid-19-incidence-morbidity-and-mortality-among-minority-ethnic-groups-23-september-2020</p> <p>There is further information available on those who are at higher risk on this link People at higher risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)</p> | <p>Wellbeing resources to provide support and help can be found on this link https://www.egfl.org.uk/sites/default/files/Main/Staff%20Wellbeing.pdf</p> <p>This could include staff from a BAME background who may have concerns and in these circumstances we would ask that headteachers/managers have a conversation (framed within a confidential and sensitive approach) with the member of staff to understand their concerns.</p> <p>There is guidance and an individual risk assessment on the EgFL under the coronavirus guidance page</p> <p>Before reaching a point where consideration of any formal action including reference to a breach of contractual obligation discuss with HR.</p> |

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| | | <p>A supportive approach should be taken to understand the concerns of the employee.</p> <p>Reassure, support and identify how/if you can relieve anxiety or provide reassurance.</p> <p>Consult HR on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Consider advising that they seek medical advice if anxiety severe.</p> <p>People who live with those who have comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) can attend the workplace</p> | |
| 11 | STAFF WHO WILL NOT ATTEND WORK DUE TO ANXIETY ABOUT TRANSMITTING THE VIRUS TO CLINICALLY VULNERABLE AND CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS | <p>See 7 and 8 above for staff living with clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable household member. Look to understand concerns of employee. Reassure, support and identify how/if you can relieve anxiety.</p> <p>Consult HR on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Consider advising that they seek medical advice if anxiety severe.</p> <p>Before reaching a point where consideration of any formal action including reference to a breach of contractual obligation discuss with HR.</p> | <p>Wellbeing resources to provide support and help can be found on this link https://www.egfl.org.uk/sites/default/files/Main/Staff%20Wellbeing.pdf</p> <p>Staff can be advised to contact their trade union for advice and support</p> |
| 12 | TRAVEL -& HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS STAFF WHO ARE REQUIRED TO SELF-ISOLATE (QUARANTINE) AFTER RETURN TO THE UK OR PRIOR TO HOSPITAL ADMISSION | <p>Travel – as at 1 Dec 2021</p> <p>All travellers arriving into the UK will need to isolate and get a PCR test by ‘day two’ after arrival. If they are fully vaccinated they may end their isolation once they receive a negative result. If the result is positive, they should continue to isolate and follow When to self-isolate and what to do - Coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk) following a positive test. Unvaccinated arrivals aged over 18 will follow the existing, more onerous, testing and isolation regime. All Red list arrivals will enter quarantine. All people travelling to England must adhere to</p> | <p>Travel</p> <p>In a situation where an employee knowingly undertakes international travel when they know they will not be able to attend work on their return (due to quarantine requirements), then they must be alerted to the likelihood that they should face a deduction in pay for the days they are unable to attend work.</p> <p>Schools should consider the following mitigating factors before deciding on any deduction of pay and should also consult their HR provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the travel for genuine medical, compassionate or emergency reasons |

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| | <p>relevant travel legislation, details of which are set out in government advice on travel to England in the link below.</p> <p>If you travel abroad from England, there are actions you need to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before you travel abroad • before you return to England • after you return to England <p>Staff should ensure they read the relevant and current guidance and do not travel (other than for medical, compassionate or emergency reasons) if it will impact on their ability to attend work before, during or upon their return to England.</p> <p>In particular staff should note that under current regulations they will be required to quarantine and take a test or tests (depending on their vaccination status) upon arrival back in England.</p> <p>The rules on quarantine are different for those who are vaccinated and those who are not vaccinated. As stated above you should not travel (unless for medical, compassionate or emergency reasons) if you can foresee that it will impact on your ability to attend work.</p> <p>There are different rules if you have been in a red list country or territory in the 10 days before you arrive in England. If you need to follow red list rules, you must do so if you are fully vaccinated or not.</p> <p>Requirements for all of the above can be located by following the link below.</p> <p>Travel to England from another country during coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can the employee demonstrate/evidence that the regulations at the time of booking were different and would have permitted them to return to duty without any quarantine • can the employee work from home without any disruption to their duties or those of colleagues • did the rules change whilst the employee was away, so that any quarantine requirement came into force after they travelled abroad <p>If any of these mitigating factors apply (or any others presented by the employee) and the school agrees that any absence from duty due to quarantine or other mandatory requirement was not foreseeable, then it would not be reasonable to deduct pay.</p> <p>Hospital Admissions</p> <p>Employees should check with their clinician or hospital about any requirements or measures prior to a hospital admission. If this requires any period of self-isolation then written evidence can be requested.</p> <p>Check with HR before confirming any period of absence will be unpaid</p> |
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| 13 | STAFF WHO CANNOT ATTEND WORK DUE TO CHILDCARE RESPONSIBILITIES | <p>With schools now fully open, childcare issues for staff should ease.</p> <p>If a member of staff has childcare problems caused by issues relating to the pandemic, we recommend that you check and understand the background to the childcare problems</p> <p>Is the breakdown in childcare provision temporary?</p> <p>Can you be more flexible (e.g. with working hours) on a short-term basis to support them being able to work while they make permanent/long term arrangements for childcare?</p> <p>Can childcare responsibility be shared (e.g. with partner)?</p> | <p>Can they work from home for a short period whilst they arrange childcare provisions?</p> <p>Is this beyond their control or is it a matter of choice (e.g. they do not want to send their child to nursery/school even if a place available)</p> <p>It is important in some cases to establish if the member of staff is required to self-isolate themselves, this could be the case if their child is symptomatic or has had a positive test result. Please refer to categories 2 and 4 above.</p> <p>Consult with HR on a case-by-case basis especially if having exhausted all other options you are considering a period of unpaid leave</p> <p>Please see additional guidance on childcare below</p> <p> Guidance on childcare to publish</p> <p>Ensure that you have consistency in approach</p> |
| 14 | STAFF WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A BEREAVEMENT LINKED TO COVID 19 Retain | <p>Bereavement Leave Provisions to be applied.</p> <p>Discuss with HR</p> <p>If your school buys into the employee assistance programme provided through workplace options, they may be able to provide support through counselling</p> | <p>Please refer to guidance on this link https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/how-cope-bereavement-and-grief-during-coronavirus-outbreak</p> |

Schools are able to request evidence from an employee to support their absence from school, much the same as they would receive a medical certificate to cover sickness absence, subject to the following:

1. A consistent approach must be maintained, please do not ask some staff for evidence but not others
2. Any information received must be treated in strictest confidence and not shared with other staff
3. In some instances, staff may not be able to provide evidence (although someone who is symptomatic and self-isolating can obtain an isolation note through the NHS Online link here <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>) and those reporting in these circumstances should be accepted on face value