

Staffing in schools - Absence and attendance

21 April 2022

Having lifted most restrictions and rules around Covid in February 2022, the Government issued further updates on 1 April 2022 to support its announcement on learning to live with Covid.

As a result, we have amended our staffing guidance document to reflect the current guidance and advice coming from the Government and relevant agencies.

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Evidence to cover employee absence

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:

- A consistent approach must be maintained, please do not ask some staff for evidence but not others
- Any information received must be treated in strictest confidence and not shared with other staff
- Staff should be able to produce evidence of a positive test result (LFT or PCR)

1. Staff who are symptomatic with COVID symptoms

Guidance

If staff have symptoms of COVID-19 or another respiratory illness (see list of symptoms below), have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, they are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they no longer have a high temperature or they no longer feel unwell.

If they consider that they have symptoms of Covid and can access a test for Covid, they should do so and follow the guidance in section 2 below if they test positive. They should notify their school of any test result. If they test negative, they can return to school if they no longer have a high temperature or feel unwell.

Covid and other respiratory symptoms:

- continuous cough,
- high temperature, fever, or chills,
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell,
- shortness of breath,
- unexplained tiredness, lack of energy,
- muscle aches or pains that are not due to exercise,
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry,
- headache that is unusual or longer lasting than usual,
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose,
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

NHS Covid symptoms list [Symptoms of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/)

Staff who are symptomatic should not be at school pending the outcome of a test result or whilst they have a high temperature or feel unwell.

Comments

Enter details of any 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.

If staff member tests positive, follow guidance for category 2 below.

Please also refer to the following scenarios

[Staff Covid-19 infection scenarios | Ealing Grid for Learning \(egfl.org.uk\)](https://www.egfl.org.uk/staff-covid-19-infection-scenarios/)

Staff who have household members who are symptomatic can advise them to follow the guidance

[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)

2. Staff who have been diagnosed with COVID 19 or who have members of their household who have been diagnosed with COVID 19

Guidance

If staff test positive for covid 19 they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

They should notify the school of their positive test result and the date it was taken.

Enter details of absence on ITrent system or your own HR system and the person who has tested positive should stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after they took the test.

Please also see the infection scenarios referred to in the comment's section, which highlight that it is particularly important to avoid close contact (for 10 days after the day you took your test) with anyone who is at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell if they are infected with Covid-19.

See guidance for staff who get a positive covid test result [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19)

If a household member of one of your staff tests positive for Covid 19, they can be shown the guidance in the link above about 'How to reduce the spread of infection in your household' and 'What to do if you are a close contact of someone who has had a positive test result for Covid 19'.

The guidance on how to reduce the spread of infection in your household is largely replicated in the comment's section.

Staff who have tested positive or are awaiting a test result should not be at school as is detailed above

Comments

Please refer to the scenarios

[Staff Covid-19 infection scenarios | Ealing Grid for Learning \(egfl.org.uk\)](#)

Staff who are not unwell may be able/agree to work from home if that is practicable

Reduce the spread of infection in your household

While you are infectious there is a high risk of passing your infection to others in your household. These are [simple things you can do to help prevent the spread](#):

- try to keep your distance from people you live with
- in shared areas wear a well-fitting face covering made with multiple layers or a surgical face mask, especially if you live with people whose [immune system means that they are at higher risk of serious illness, despite vaccination](#)
- ventilate rooms you have been in by opening windows and leaving them open for at least 10 minutes after you have left the room
- wash your hands regularly and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- regularly clean frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and remote controls, and shared areas such as kitchens and bathrooms
- advise anyone that does need to come into your home that you have a positive test result, so they can take precautions to protect themselves such as wearing a well-fitting face covering or a surgical face mask, keeping their distance if they can, and washing their hands regularly

[GermDefence](#) is a website that can help you identify simple ways to protect yourself and others in your household from COVID-19 and other viruses. People who use GermDefence are less likely to catch flu and other infections and are less likely to spread them at home.

3. Staff whose immune system means that they are at higher risk and guidance for those previously considered to be CEV

Guidance

Please refer to [COVID-19: guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This guidance confirms which groups are considered at highest risk and may therefore be eligible for treatments and further vaccinations.

See also guidance for people previously considered CEV

[Guidance for people previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

4. Staff who are pregnant

Guidance

Pregnant staff and their employers should consider the advice issued by the NHS – “pregnancy and coronavirus (Covid 19)” [Pregnancy and coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) this was published on the 1st April 2022.

It is still a requirement to undertake a pregnancy related risk assessment for a member of staff who informs you that she is pregnant. The link to the generic risk assessment template on the Ealing Grid for Learning is here [Pregnancy risk assessment example Sept 2021 .doc \(live.com\)](#)

If the pregnant member of staff has any concerns about Covid, the workplace and her pregnancy then she should raise these with you and also discuss them with her clinician or medical adviser.

Discussing these concerns may lead to a further (Covid) risk assessment being undertaken ([Individual Staff Risk Assessment and Support Plan April 2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)) and consequently measures considered to identify whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to help mitigate any risks identified.

5. Staff who have experienced a bereavement linked to Covid 19

Guidance

Bereavement Leave Provisions to be applied.

Discuss with HR.

If your school buys into the employee assistance programme provided through workplace options, they may be able to provide support through counselling.

Comments

Please refer to guidance

<https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/how-cope-bereavement-and-grief-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

6. List of key documents for schools for reference and information

- [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) health protection in education and childcare settings](#)
- [DfE emergency planning and response](#)
- [DfE good estate management for schools](#)
- [guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19](#)
- [living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#)
- [ventilation of indoor spaces to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance for people whose immune system means they are at higher risk](#)
- [Reducing the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, in the workplace - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)