

# Tuesday 17 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 self-isolation 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 self-isolation 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. For further guidance for staff on staying at home please direct them to the recent Government advice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

### **Working from home**

11. The following groups of staff are now advised to make arrangements with their Headteachers to work from home effective immediately:
- Staff who have one or more of the following underlying medical conditions:
    - Diabetes
    - Cardiovascular disease
    - Chronic lung disease
    - Cancer
    - Chronic kidney disease
  - 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 has self-isolated or 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](mailto:olivia.frings@reachsouth.org). Any member of staff declaring the need to self isolate 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 self-isolating 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 self-isolating 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.
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.
22. Where 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 self-isolate, that their normal terms and conditions of service will apply.
24. Staff that are self-isolating 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 then all staff will be expected to work from home. Home working arrangements will be put in place for all 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. Staff who are unable to work from home or who choose to work from home will be allowed to request unpaid leave, or other leave such as unpaid parental leave. The normal process applies.
28. 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.
29. The Trust will be introducing a new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) over the next week 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 information will be made within the next few days.