

Friday 27 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 whilst they 'stay at home'.
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 or return to work.
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.

Ending self-isolation and household-isolation

7. Self-isolation

- 7.1 If you have been symptomatic, then you may end your self-isolation after 7 days. The 7-day period starts from the day when you first became ill.

8. Household isolation

- 8.1 If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.
- 8.2 After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine. If any other family members become unwell during the 14-day household-isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.

- 8.3 Should a household member develop coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day household-isolation period (for example, on day 13 or day 14) the isolation period does not need to be extended, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days. The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to restart 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection. Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.
- 8.4 At the end of the 14-day period, any family member who has not become unwell can leave household isolation.
- 8.5 If any ill person in the household has not had any signs of improvement and have not already sought medical advice, they should contact NHS 111 online. If your home has no internet access, you should call NHS 111.
- 8.6 The cough may persist for several weeks in some people, despite the coronavirus infection having cleared. A persistent cough alone does not mean someone must continue to self-isolate for more than 7 days.
9. When a member of staff contacts you regarding the stay at home guidance due to their own illness or illness of a household member, they will need to do one of the following where they have not already provided a fit note, a GP note or an email from NHS 111:
- For those who are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus please go to [NHS 111](#). You will be asked a number of questions and you will be provided with an isolation note should you be required to self-isolate. Please send this to absence@reachsouth.org
 - For those who live with someone who is experiencing symptoms of coronavirus please contact NHS 111 and if their advice is to stay at home then you can obtain an isolation note from [NHS Website](#). Again you will be asked a number of questions and you will be provided with a isolation note which will need to be sent to absence@reachsouth.org
10. Please ensure that you inform your Headteacher of your absence and the reason for your absence.
11. Schools will be required complete a report for the Trust centrally at 4.00pm Monday-Friday on all absences related to the coronavirus.
12. National guidance for staff on [Staying at Home](#) is available. Please follow this carefully.
13. Where a member of staff/worker is experiencing symptoms of the Covid-19 coronavirus they will need to make arrangements for a spouse, partner or someone in the household to make contact with the designated SLT member in schools and the relevant Director, if not working in an Academy, so that arrangements can be made to change rotas and support teams during this challenging and unprecedented period.
14. This person will be identified as the key staff member contact for updates on the health and wellbeing of the individual staff member and for plans to return to work.

15. For those staff/workers who live alone please ensure you make your designated SLT member or Director aware of this so that additional support can be identified, where necessary.
16. The Trust are introducing this process in order to support all its staff through this challenging time and to ensure that Senior Leaders are able to respond rapidly to an every changing environment.
17. Your designated SLT member in the school or Director will make contact with HR via absence@reachsouth.org for further advice and guidance.

Working from home

18. The following groups of staff are now strongly advised, if not already, 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 have 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 (The Trust has made the decision to lower the age group to 65).
19. There are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. This week the NHS in England will directly contact people in this category with advice about the more stringent measures that should be taken in order to keep themselves and others safe. This is known as [Shielding](#)
20. People falling into this group are those who may be at particular risk due to complex health problems such as:
 - Solid organ transplant recipients.
 - People with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment

- people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired

21. Where a member of staff lives with a person who is identified as being in one of the groups in section 20 they will be required to work from home until further notice. Whilst this is not national guidance at this time, the Trust have made the decision to minimise risk to this group of people.

Further Information for People with Asthma

22. Asthma UK published the following [shielding advice](#) yesterday, which I think it helpful clarification.

“If you are, or your child is, taking:

- *Any biologic therapy, also called a mAb (Xolair/omalizumab, Nucala/mepolizumab, Cinqaero/reslizumab, Fasenra/benralizumab)*
- *Steroid tablets or liquid every day*
- *Antibiotic tablets or liquid for asthma every week (e.g. azithromycin)*
- *Tiotropium*
- *A combination inhaler that also contains a long-acting bronchodilator (e.g. Seretide, Fostair, Symbicort) at a high daily steroid dose (see the listin the article)*
- *An inhaler with a high daily steroid dose (see the list....in the article) AND you are taking Montelukast*

Or, if:

- *You have been admitted to hospital for your asthma in the last 12 months*
- *You have ever been admitted to an intensive care unit for your asthma*

Then you should follow the shielding advice above which is set out in very helpful detail, including how to register for extra services from the government.

23. Please follow all of the Government guidance carefully.

24. Please confirm these arrangements with your Headteacher who will in turn confirm with Olivia Frings, Director HR or Ian Carnwell, Director of Learning Environment.

25. 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 absence@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?

26. 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.
27. Homeworking does not entitle you to choose when and how you work. It simply means you do your job from home.
28. 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 where required.

29. Working arrangements

- You should discuss with your line manager to what extent your normal duties can be carried out at home; homeworking in some roles is likely to be impractical. In these circumstances, your line manager will need to consult your HR Department and Trust local continuity plan to identify alternative cover for the work in question, particularly for business-critical activities. You may also be asked to undertake alternative duties wherever reasonably practicable and within your capabilities.
- If you are working from home, you may have unplanned caring responsibilities for dependants during this period (e.g. due to school, nursery or nursing home closures).
- In these circumstances, it is anticipated that staff and line managers will need to exercise a certain level of flexibility in order to accommodate this unusual situation.

30. Health, safety and insurance

- You should report any changes in your health to your line manager at the earliest opportunity. This would include coronavirus (Covid-19) or any other sickness or health issues (e.g. pregnancy, accident, injury, disability or work-related stress).
- You should ensure that you have access to a safe homeworking environment in which you can carry out your duties.
- The Trust will reimburse your telephone costs where appropriate and strictly by prior agreement. However, you are encouraged to use free virtual means of communication e.g. Business Skype
- You will be responsible for all other normal costs associated with your place of residence (e.g. heating, lighting and broadband).

31. Communication

- Homeworking over a sustained period of time can lead to feelings of isolation. You should ensure that you are in regular contact with your team throughout, including maintaining one-to-ones and team meetings and continuing to collaborate with colleagues remotely via Business Skype and telephone, email.

32. Home working tools and set-up

22.1 Your department/school should identify whether Trust equipment, such as laptops or mobiles, could be made available to you during the homeworking period for work purposes.

22.2 You must take reasonable steps to safeguard this property and return it at the end of the homeworking period, or earlier if requested.

- If you use your own computing equipment to work from home, please see IT advice on working from home securely:
- Some schools run their own email services and users should refer to local instructions.
- Text, voice and video conversations can be supported using Business Skype
- In the event that there is a high demand for remote access, the Trust reserves the right to prioritise access for individuals who are carrying out business-critical activities.

22.3 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.

33. 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 in the school setting

34. Even if all schools are closed we need to try our best as a team to continue to deliver good quality education.

35. Recruitment

36. It is imperative that recruitment activity continues in order to ensure the Trust has a full workforce for September 2020. All Headteachers are asked to review their staffing requirements and work with their EBM to ensure that recruitment activity is taken forward, where necessary.

37. We are asking all schools to do their best not to cancel interviews unless a full review of staffing requirements have taken place and contingency plans are in place to ensure the school is fully operational once schools re-open fully.

38. We are therefore asking schools to look into new ways of determining a candidates suitability. This will require a more creative approach to recruitment and the HR Team and your EBM will work with you and support you to do this.

39. Skype or Zoom are available to assist and the Recruitment Team will be able to assist you with setting up video conferencing arrangements so please make contact with them so that they can assist you.
40. Right to work and ID documentation checks are being relaxed in that employers can now view original documents over a video link and appointees will be asked to bring these documents with them on their first working day. The Recruitment Team will make arrangements directly with successful candidates to view documents over video conferencing and DBS checks will be processed immediately. Appointees will send copies of these documents to the Recruitment Team via email to ensure we have copies of all relevant documents. This will apply to qualifications also.
41. The Recruitment Team will work with schools to ensure that offers are made as a matter of priority. This will include contracts of employment once all safer recruitment checks are completed.

42. Employment

43. 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.
44. 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.
45. Sickness absence targets and/or triggers will be suspended for all staff who have absence connected to the Covid-19 virus .
46. 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.
47. Staff who are unable to work from home, because for example they have caring responsibilities that limit their ability to do so, 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.
48. The Trust have confirmed that all casual workers, who do not have an additional substantive role with the Trust, will receive a weekly payment equivalent to statutory sick pay. This will be paid on a monthly basis and will not include school holidays. This group of staff will be Furloughed until further notice (this means they will not work). Further information can be obtained from payroll-pensions@reachsouth.org
49. The Trust have 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. This includes further details of how staff can access this support will be made available within the next 48 hours.

50. Details of the programme can be found on the Reach South website as follows:
<https://www.reachsouth.org/staff-resources> Click on Staff Only/EAP. Password: academy