

GUIDANCE ON ABSENCE RELATING TO CORONAVIRUS

ADVICE FOR MANAGERS AND STAFF

The health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff is of paramount importance to all education employers in the sector. The following guidance has been produced so employers and employees are aware of arrangements regarding the sickness absence scheme in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19).

The decision on whether an employee should attend work, if they believe they have been exposed to coronavirus, should be taken in conjunction with the Public Health Agency (PHA) guidance and medical advice at all times.

The following guidance applies to employees subject to NJC/JNC or TNC terms and conditions.

SCENARIO 1: No symptoms of coronavirus but medically advised to self-isolate or be quarantined

- If an employee has no symptoms of coronavirus but is required by the PHA, or on other advice such as from a GP, to self-isolate or undergo quarantine they will receive normal pay, with any coronavirus absences excluded from any calculation of contractual sick pay. There will therefore be no impact on absence trigger points or contractual sick pay.
- Where possible these employees should work from home and return to the workplace after the prescribed period by the PHA or GP if there are still no symptoms.
- The employee must keep their Principal/Line Manager informed throughout this period.

SCENARIO 2: Symptoms of coronavirus and medically advised to self-isolate or be quarantined

- If an employee is displaying symptoms of coronavirus and has sought advice from a GP who has advised they must self-isolate or be placed in quarantine, they should refrain from attending work and follow medical advice. Any coronavirus absences will be excluded from any calculation of contractual sick pay. The employee will receive normal pay. There will therefore be no impact on absence trigger points or contractual sick pay.
- An employee must not return to work until advised that it is safe to do so by their GP.
- The employee must keep their Principal/Line manager informed throughout this period.

Please Note

*This guidance includes current advices from the PHA and may be subject to change. In the event of new information or guidance a further update will be issued. Please also refer to the **Guidance for Educational Settings** page at the following link: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>*

SCENARIO 3: Employee is directed by their Principal/Line Manager not to attend their place of work due to a temporary closure relating to coronavirus

- If an employee is directed by their Principal/Line Manager not to attend their place of work due to a temporary closure relating to coronavirus they shall receive their normal pay. Where possible these employees should work from home or other agreed workplace and return to work when directed to do so.

SCENARIOS 1, 2 and 3 will apply to both substitute teachers and non-teaching staff providing emergency cover for the period of time they have been engaged to work.

Importance of medical advice

- Where no symptoms are present and/or the medical guidance from the PHA or your GP does not direct you to stay at home (or be placed in quarantine), you will be expected to attend work as normal.
- If an employee has any concerns regarding their attendance at work they should discuss this with their Principal/Line Manager who will contact the Employing Authority if necessary.

Certification information

- Staff will be required to provide evidence of the necessity to self-isolate/quarantine and where applicable diagnosis. Staff will be afforded a reasonable period of time to provide evidence post recovery, of any isolation or quarantine (e.g. travel documentation and/or medical correspondence). Where an absence is created on coronavirus symptoms however the test is negative the individual member of staff can return to work when advised by their GP. If diagnosed with an illness unrelated to coronavirus then the absence will revert to normal sickness scheme procedures.

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