



‘Innovative Education - Transforming Lives’

Managing Staff Absence in Unprecedented Times Procedure
Addendum to Managing Attendance at Work Policy

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Status | Statutory |
| Responsible Directors' Committee | Board of Directors |
| LGB Committee | Full Governing Board |
| Responsible Persons | Mrs. B Nixon |
| Date Policy Agreed | April 2020 |
| Reviewed Date | November 2020 |
| Date of Next Review | January 2021 |

Contents

Page

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Purpose of the guidance: | 3 |
| 2. What to do when you will be absent from work during unprecedented times: | 3 |
| 3. Staff absence due to COVID 19 Procedure..... | 3 |
| 4. What to do if an individual (pupil or staff) becomes unwell or sent home due to being on contact with someone is ill..... | 4 |
| 5. Making claims via SAS for employees who are absent due to COVID 19..... | 6 |
| 6. Staff absence due to another reason other than COVID 19 Procedure | 7 |
| 7. Making claims on SAS for employees who are absent due to another reason other than COVID 19 | 8 |

| <i>Version</i> | <i>Revision Date</i> | <i>Revised by</i> | <i>Section Revised</i> |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| V1 | September 2020 | | New Procedure |
| V2 | November 2020 | L Burton | Page 3 - Section 3 updated Page 5 – updated section on A person who is sent home because they have been in contact with someone with who has tested positive |
| V3 | February 2021 | A HIBBITT | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

1. Purpose of the guidance:

The purpose of this addendum is to ensure all staff are aware of what to do during unprecedented times such as COVID 19 and they become unwell and are not able to work.

2. What to do when you will be absent from work during unprecedented times:

If you are reporting that you will be absent from work you must provide the following information:-

- Is the absence due to COVID 19?
- Is the absence due to another reason?

Once the above has been identified the appropriate procedure will then be implemented.

3. Staff absence due to COVID 19 Procedure

When an employee advises they are showing symptoms of the virus or they live with someone who is showing symptoms the following should be implemented –

- Advise them to contact NHS 111 for medical advice and not visit their GP
- Employee who believes they have symptoms as outlined on NHS 111 online must follow government guidance and **arrange a test, and start to** self-isolate for a period of 10 days from the start of their symptoms if they live alone
- **If living with others then all members of the household should isolate for 10 days or in line with the latest Government/Public Health advice. Any household members who remain well may end their isolation after 10 days. The 10-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill, (fourteen days is the incubation period for Covid 19).**
- **If another member of your household has symptoms of coronavirus you must start a 10-day period of self-isolation or in line with the latest Government/Public Health advice counting from the day, the symptomatic person first had symptoms. You must not attend work until the person with symptoms has taken a test. If the test result is positive you should complete the remaining days of the 10-day period of isolation. If the test result is negative you can return to work.**
- Employees who were the first person to show symptoms can return back to work after 10 days if they do not have a temperature as the cough can last many weeks.
- **If other members develop the symptoms later in the 10 days' household isolation period, the isolation period does not need to be extended for the other members. Only the latest case needs to stay isolating for 10 days or in line with the latest Government/Public Health advice**
- **IF an employee with symptoms tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) then they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better. Other members of their household can stop self-isolating.**

- Employees who are sick or unfit for work must remain at home and focus on their recovery and seek medical attention where necessary.
- Employees should follow the usual sickness absence reporting procedures and will continue to be paid as per their terms and conditions.
- For absences lasting longer than 7 days the academy may ask the employee to provide a 'self-isolation note' which can be obtained from NHS 111 by completing a simple questionnaire online.

The latest government guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

Any member of staff who advised they cannot attend work due to self-isolation as another member of the family is showing symptoms, may be expected to work from home if they are fit and well during an isolation period and this would not then be recorded as sickness absence.

Further guidance on managing absence due to COVID 19 can be obtained from the for Managing Coronavirus in the Workplace Guidance for Principals and Managers Version 4 from Advanced HR.

4. What to do if an individual (pupil or staff) becomes unwell or sent home due to being on contact with someone is ill

This diagram shows how to advise individuals (children and adults) and their households if they become unwell OR if they are sent home because they have been in contact with someone who is ill.

A person with symptoms

If anyone becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell, then they must be sent home and advised follow <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>, which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus.

All children can be tested, including children under 5, but children aged 11 and under will need to be helped by their parent/carers if using home testing kit.

If a person becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), then other members of their household (including any siblings should self-isolate for 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

IF a person with symptoms tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19) then they can stop self-isolating. They could still have another virus, such as cold or flu – in which case it is still best to avoid contact with other people until they are better

Other members of their household can stop self-isolating

If a person with symptoms tests positive, then they should follow the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms or other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste – this is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

A person who is sent home because they have been in contact with someone with who has tested positive

Academies must take swift action when they become aware that someone who has attended has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Academies should contact the local health protection team. This team will also contact academies directly if they become aware that someone has tested positive and attended school – as identified by the NHS Test and Trace'

The health protection team will carry out a rapid risk assessment to confirm who has been in close contact with the person during the period that they were infectious, and ensure they are asked to self-isolate.

The health protection team will work with academies in this situation to guide them through the actions they need to take. Based on the advice from the health protection team, academies must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days from the date the positive person started with symptoms.

If a person has been in close contact with someone who has tested positive and is sent home to self-isolate for 10 days, **then** *their household* does not need to self-isolate, unless the person who is self-isolating subsequently develops symptoms.

If a person who has been in contact with someone who has tested positive subsequently *develops symptoms themselves* within their 10 days isolation period, **then** they should follow <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> – stay at home and get a test.

If the test delivers a **negative result**, then they must remain in isolation for the remainder of the 10 day-day isolation period. This is because they could still develop the coronavirus within the remaining days.

If the test delivers a **positive result**, then they (or their parent in the case of a child) should inform the academy immediately and should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms (which could mean the self-isolation ends before or after the original 10-day isolation period).

*If the test delivers a **negative result**, then their household can stop self-isolating if they do not have symptoms*

If the test delivers a **positive result**, then their household should self-isolate for at least 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms, following [‘https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance)

Two or more confirmed cases within 14 days

If academies have two or more confirmed cases within 14 days, or an overall rise in sickness absence where coronavirus (COVID-19) is suspected, we may have an outbreak, and must continue to work with our local health protection team who will be able to advise if additional action is required.

In some cases, health protection teams may recommend that a larger number of other pupils self-isolate at home as a precautionary measure – perhaps the whole site or year group. If academies are implementing controls from the above list, addressing the risks they have identified and therefore reducing transmission risks, whole school closure based on cases within the academy will not generally be necessary, and should not be considered except on the advice of health protection teams.

In consultation with the local Director of Public Health and where an outbreak in an academy is confirmed a mobile testing unit may be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who has tested positive.

Testing will first focus on the person’s class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with the routine public health outbreak control practice.

5. Making claims via SAS for employees who are absent due to COVID 19

The primary purpose of the staff absence policy is to provide cover for the cost of the need to cover staff absence and under the current circumstances it is not likely that the Trust/Academy

will be incurring external staff cover costs. Therefore, Schools Advisory Service have advised the following -

If a member of staff calls to say **they cannot attend work due to a member of their family having symptoms of the virus** and they are due to be in school to care for Key Worker or vulnerable children, you should where possible take the following action -

- Change their place on the staffing rota to give them the required 10 days. Or
- Allocate some work that they can do at home as they are not ill and then not record the occasion as sickness absence.

If they are not due to be in school for the next 10 days, they should carry on with the work at home as per the plan agreed by the Principal of the Academy.

If a member of staff calls in to say **they have the symptoms of the virus**, the following should take place -

- Member of staff to take the time off with pay as sickness as per section 3
- Member of staff responsible for registering staff absence on the SAS portal to write a short report on headed paper on the circumstances of the employee. Include whether they are at home or in hospital, what advice has been given by NHS 111 or GP.
- Upload the report to the SAS portal to register the claim. this will be sufficient as GPs are not routinely testing or providing medical certificates for suspected cases).

The above does not guarantee a claim will be paid as under current circumstances no cover is required and rotas should be changed, further guidance will be provided once available from SAS.

6. Staff absence due to another reason other than COVID 19 Procedure

When a member of staff has made contact to advise they are not fit for work and it is not related to COVID 19 then the Managing Attendance at Work Policy should be implemented as follows –

- The employee must contact the designated person within their workplace by the agreed specified time, stipulated by the academy (it is expected that this would be prior to the employee's 'normal' starting time). If the designated person is not available the employee should leave brief details of their absence with a colleague, along with a contact telephone number. The designated person will call back to obtain full details and the length the employee is expected to be absent.
- Updates on how the employee is feeling should be provided daily so as to keep the academy up to date and enable changes to be made to staff rotas where applicable.
- A self-certification note should be provided for periods of absence lasting less than 7 days.

- If an absence period is expected to last longer than 7 days, then a doctor's note should be obtained after 7 days (or 5 working days) and the short term absence review implemented.
- Return to work interviews should take place over the phone or via a Teams meeting if possible. This is to ensure the employee is fully recovered and to record the sickness correctly, the accuracy of these records is important to ensure that pay is correct and that trigger points are recorded correctly.
- If the absence is expected to be long term, then the long term absence review should be implemented.

Where staff are working on a rota basis consideration should be given to the employee who is identifying as absent due to illness, the Managing at Attendance at Work policy should still be followed to ensure the academy is kept up to date on the employee's recovery so that they can be considered when they are likely to be fit for work and included in the rota basis in place.

7. Making claims on SAS for employees who are absent due to another reason other than COVID 19

When a member of staff has advised they are not fit for work due to illness the usual procedure should be followed to make a claim from Schools Advisory Service -

- Obtain the reason for the absence from work, taking a note of the date and time the call was made and ask the employee to make contact to update on how they are feeling and advise when they are likely to be fit for work.
- Pass the details to the person responsible for uploading to SAS, SIMS and the HR Portal.
- Provide the employee with a self-certificate and ask them to complete it and return it, leaving the end date free if they are going to be off for a number of days.
- If the illness lasts longer than 7 days (5 working days) they must obtain a doctors fit note to cover their continued absence from work
- The claim should be updated on the SAS portal as per the usual route

All claims made for absence due to illness other than COVID 19 will be processed in the usual way.

The information in this procedure is subject to change following advice from DfE on claims made via SAS in relation to the current situation.

Procedure Agreed: 2021

Signed CEO: 

Signed: Chair of Directors: 

Procedure to be reviewed in Spring 2021