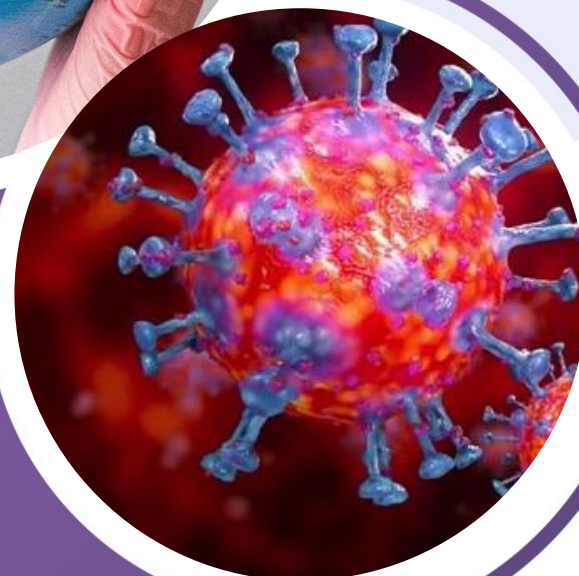




CORONAVIRUS & RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS POLICY

As we learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19) and subsequent strains, there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people.



Overview

As we learn to live safely with coronavirus (COVID-19) and subsequent strains, there are actions we can all take to help reduce the risk of catching COVID-19 and passing it on to others. These actions will also help to reduce the spread of other respiratory infections, such as flu, which can spread easily and may cause serious illness in some people.

This policy is designed to provide you with important information and what we are doing to support our staff and our learners. Please continue to take time to read the information and ask questions if you have any concerns. This policy is non contractual, it may be amended or added to at any time and it will be updated, as appropriate, to reflect changing advice. It applies to all staff, including those who work for us on a casual basis, but it doesn't apply to anyone we engage on a self-employed basis.

Respiratory infections can spread easily between people. It is important for staff and employers to be aware of symptoms so they can take actions to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to other people.

The symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections are very similar so it is not possible to tell if you have COVID-19, flu or another infection based on symptoms alone. Most people with COVID-19 will have a relatively mild illness, especially if they have been vaccinated.

Symptoms of COVID-19, flu and common respiratory infections include:

- 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

But these symptoms do not necessarily mean you have the illness. The Coronavirus Symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. Current guidance indicates that among those who become infected, some will exhibit no symptoms. Of those who do develop an illness, the majority will have a mild to moderate illness similar to seasonal flu. A minority will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia and in a small number of these the illness may be severe enough to lead to death.

Preventative steps and hygiene We are taking all reasonable steps to protect your health and safety. We require all staff to follow these simple steps to help stop the spread of germs like Coronavirus.

Do:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – only use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

Don't:

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

What to do if you have Coronavirus/Flu symptoms at work?

If you become ill at work, please speak to your line manager as quickly as possible. We have a room [board room] that you can go to which has a telephone. Or, you should go to an area that is at least two meters away from other people and, if possible, find a room or area where you can be isolated behind a closed door, such as a staff office/refreshment room. If you can, please open a window for ventilation. Please try to avoid unnecessarily touching surfaces. If you have internet access, please use the NHS 111 online service and follow the advice you receive. If you don't have internet access please call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency. If you are advised to go home and self-isolate, please tell your line manager and then make your way home as safely as possible. If you travel on public transport, please follow any instructions given to you by the NHS staff. If you need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, please use the toilet by the refreshment room. If you become ill at home, please do not come into work. You'll need to telephone us in accordance with our usual absence policy. If you have internet access, please use the NHS 111 online service and follow the advice you receive. If you don't have internet access, please call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency.

There is a Covid log that should be completed by the line manager

What to do if you test positive for Coronavirus

Please advise us immediately if you test positive for Coronavirus, even if your symptoms are mild. You will not be able to return to work until you are considered fit by Public Health England or any other competent authority. You don't need to obtain a fit note from your doctor, but please send to us anything you do receive which confirms your diagnosis and/or fitness to return to work. If you feel well enough to work, please let us know. If your role lends itself to homeworking, we'll discuss how we can facilitate that, in line with our Working from Home Policy. We will not inform anyone else about your condition unless it's necessary to do so and we are legally able to. Our overriding obligation is to protect the health and safety of our staff, and we may therefore have to speak to your colleagues and other people with whom you've been in close contact in order to protect them. Any information we disclose will be limited to what is necessary for that protection. Public Health England are responsible for 'contact tracing' (tracing anyone you have been in close contact with) and we will cooperate with them as appropriate.

What to do if you are advised by a medical professional to self-isolate

New government advice is that people should stay at home if they, or anyone in their household has Coronavirus or has symptoms of Coronavirus. Those at high risk may also have to self-isolate even if they, or anyone in their household doesn't have symptoms. This means you should:

- Stay at home
- Not go to work or public areas
- Not use public transport or taxis
- Ask friends, family members or delivery services to carry out errands for you
- Try to avoid visitors to your home, although it's okay for friends, family and delivery drivers to drop off food

You may need to do this for 5 days (longer if you are in a high-risk group) to help reduce the possible spread of infection. Please follow the advice you are given. Please follow any additional advice given to you by health professionals. The NHS has detailed advice on self-isolation available [here](#). If you feel well enough to work, please let us know. If your role lends itself to homeworking, we'll discuss

how we can facilitate that in line with our Homeworking policy. If you don't feel well enough to work, or you can't work from home, please keep in touch with us. The government has up to date information for individuals who have travelled overseas and returned to the UK.

If you have been abroad recently, please consult the government guidelines and inform us if you are required to self-isolate.

Sick pay policy

Statutory sick pay

If you are diagnosed with Coronavirus or have Coronavirus Symptoms and you are too unwell to work from home, we will pay you statutory sick pay providing you meet the qualifying conditions. You will need to comply with the usual rules around notification set out in our sickness policy but you don't need to obtain a fit note unless your illness lasts for longer than 14 days. Guidelines may change and the .gov website should be consulted for current updates.

Self-isolation

If you are advised to self-isolate and don't have any symptoms, we may pay you statutory sick pay as is set out above, even if you are not able to work from home. We may need to contact you to ask about work related issues, so please tell your manager the best number to contact you on.

Business travel, meetings and events

We will keep matters under review and will follow NHS and government advice. Currently, we recommend that you:

- Only travel if it is essential to do so outside of attending your normal workplace
- Please hold telephone or video conferences unless a face to face meeting is essential.
- If you are due to attend external events, please check with the event organisations and speak to us if you are unhappy about attending.
- Take precautions for essential face to face meetings
- Please follow NHS advice. It's also sensible to avoid shaking hands.

Holidays

We recommend that you think carefully before booking holidays abroad and obtain appropriate insurance which covers cancellations. If you wish to cancel any pre-booked holidays, please speak to your manager. If we can't accommodate your request, we'll explain why. Government guidance for tests on return to the UK must be followed.

Responding to emergencies

Many of you will have caring responsibilities for family members or other people who rely on you. If you need to respond to an emergency (such as a school closure) please tell us as quickly as possible. We always consider the circumstances of each case to allow for some flexibility, but the time you take off must be both reasonable and necessary for you to deal with something immediately and/or respond to an emergency. We regret that if you take time off you won't be paid unless we agree that you can work from home.

Workplace closure

If we have to close the business, or there's not sufficient work available, perhaps because less people are using our services, we will advise you as quickly as we can. If your contract gives us the

right to lay you off, then we may exercise it. Alternatively, we may ask you to take unpaid leave, agree that we can lay you off or ask you to work fewer hours (which will result in a reduction in your salary). We may continue to pay you whilst we monitor the situation. However, if our business (or parts of it) have to shut down for a significant amount of time, as an alternative to making redundancies, we may discuss with you other options such as taking unpaid leave or asking you to take paid holiday.

Where to find up to date information

- UK Government: Social distancing and protecting high risk groups
- UK Government: travel information including information about 'high risk' countries/regions and information for people travelling overseas.
- NHS: information about Coronavirus
- World Health Authority: latest advice UK Government:
- Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK
- UK Government: Guidance for businesses
- NHS: guidance on staying at home
- UK Government: guidance on staying at home
- The Education Hub

WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE TO HAVE THE DOUBLE VACCINE AND THE BOOSTER JAB WHERE APPLICABLE.

- Bringing in fresh air to occupied spaces can help to reduce the concentration of respiratory particles, lowering the risk of airborne transmission of respiratory viruses.
- The risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 and other respiratory infections can be higher in certain places and when doing certain activities. When someone with an infection breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they release respiratory particles which can contain the virus. These particles can come into contact with the eyes, nose or mouth or can be breathed in by another person. These virus-containing particles can also land on surfaces and the virus can be passed from person to person via touch. In general, the risk of catching or passing on a respiratory infection is highest when in close contact with someone who is infected.

Maintain a clean workplace

- Keeping workplaces clean reduces the risk of infection and can reduce sickness in a workforce. It's especially important to clean surfaces that people touch a lot.
- Staff can be supported to maintain a clean working environment by providing them with cleaning products, soap and hot water, and/or sanitiser.

Please also read the booklet "Reducing spread of respiratory infections and COVID 19 at work"

Policy published date	March 2020
Date of last review	Feb 2026
Next review due	Feb 2027
Person responsible for policy and review	Sue Tipton
<i>Susan A Tipton</i>	