



11<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## COVID-19 coronavirus

Dear all,

I am writing in response to a number of queries and concerns raised regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Since the initial reports of the spread of COVID-19 all our schools have been closely following the guidance sent out by the DfE and Public Health England, in conjunction with local advice through our school nursing team.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

As you will be aware through the press, COVID-19 is a virus spread person to person through cough and sneeze droplets, and information on the NHS website states that “very unlikely spread through things like packages or food”. Therefore, personal hygiene is the most important way we can tackle COVID-19, especially washing hands more; and the “*catch it, bin it, kill it*” strategy for those with coughs and sneezes, advice being:

- **Wash your hands more often for 20 seconds with soap and hot water**

Public Health England has a dedicated webpage with a range of posters and digital materials at:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-coronavirus-/resources>

We have had a number of staff and parents contacting the school asking what to do if they feel that they have symptoms or have come into contact with someone who has COVID-19 – please find attached guidance taken directly from the DfE guidance to schools.

In summary, the guidance as of this morning is:

- Unless you have come into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 then there is no reason to not go about daily activities, therefore we expect all children to attend school and staff to be in work.
- If in doubt dial NHS 111

As a trust we are in constant communication with each school and if the situation in a school changes, or as information from the government is updated, then we will support each headteacher to respond accordingly. Their responses may include reducing the timetable to minimise trips out of school; through to closing classes if staff and students become unwell; through to school closure, all of which are part of advice given to schools to manage any situation that is a health and safety concern. Through every stage we will be in close contact with Public Health England through our nursing team and will keep you all informed.

Please rest assured that the health, safety and wellbeing of all our students and staff is of paramount importance.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Latham

Taken directly from: **COVID-19: Guidance for education settings**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

## **7. What to do if pupils, students or staff in your institution are contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 who was symptomatic while attending your childcare or educational setting**

The definition of a contact includes:

- any pupil, student or staff member in close face-to-face or touching contact including those undertaking small group work (within 2 metres of the case for more than 15 minutes)
- talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the individual is symptomatic
- anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids of the individual
- close friendship groups
- any pupil, student or staff member living in the same household as a confirmed case, or equivalent setting such as boarding school dormitory or other student accommodation

Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others, however:

- they will be asked to self-isolate at home, or within their boarding school dormitory room, for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the [home isolation advice sheet](#)
- they will be actively followed up by the Health Protection Team
- if they develop any symptoms within their 14-day observation period they should call NHS 111 for assessment
- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19
- if they require emergency medical attention, call 999 and tell the call handler or ambulance control that the person has a history of potential contact with COVID-19
- if they are unwell at any time within their 14-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection

Family and friends who have not had close contact (as listed above) with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities such as attending childcare or educational settings or work, unless they become unwell. If they become unwell, they should call NHS 111 and explain their symptoms and discuss any known contact with the case to consider if they need further assessment.

If a confirmed case occurs in an educational setting the local Health Protection Team will provide you with advice and will work with the headteacher, principal and or management team of that setting. Outside those that are defined as close contacts, the rest of the school does not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities attending educational establishments or work as usual, unless they become unwell. If they become unwell they will be assessed as a suspected case depending on their symptoms. This advice applies to teaching staff and children in the rest of the class who are not in a close friendship group or children undertaking small group work. The decision as to whether pupils, students and staff fall into this contact group or the closer contact group will be made between the Health Protection Team, the educational setting and (if they are old enough) the student. Advice should be given as follows:

- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be asked to self-isolate and should seek medical advice from NHS 111
- if they are unwell at any time within the 14 days of contact and they are tested and are positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated as such.