

New guidance for households with symptoms

Yesterday, the Government introduced new guidance on whole household isolation in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak:

if you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started

if you live with others and you or another member of the household have symptoms of coronavirus, then all household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill. It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community 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.

The symptoms are:

- A high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- A new, continuous cough

The full stay at home guidance for households with these symptoms can be found here:

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

The Prime Minister's statement from Monday 16 March can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-16-march-2020>

Temporary suspension of Ofsted inspections

Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children's social care providers and local authorities to reduce the burden on staff who are providing vital services to the nation in response to coronavirus.

The current medical and scientific advice is for schools and other educational establishments to stay open. If this changes and the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser say closing schools, colleges, and early years settings is in the best interests of children and teachers the Department will take that step.

The full announcement made by Gavin Williamson can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/UkW7QcTsBcY>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/routine-ofsted-inspections-suspended-in-response-to-coronavirus>

Updated guidance on recording school pupil absences

No school will be penalised for the impact on school attendance of coronavirus (COVID-19). Please record absences as follows:

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally happen, the pupil should be recorded as absent in the attendance register and the school will authorise the absence. Code I (Illness) should be used in this instance.

Where a pupil is in self-isolation, in accordance with latest information and advice from Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, the pupil should be recorded as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances in the attendance register. Code Y (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) should be used in this instance.

Where a pupil does not attend school and is not self-isolating, the pupil will be marked as absent. We back headteachers' judgement and to be pragmatic – having spoken to parents – on whether to authorise such absence, taking into account individual circumstances.

We expect, in particular, headteachers will authorise absence where a pupil is not able to attend because of an underlying health condition that means they, or a family member in their household, are particularly vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Handwashing advice

The most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Public Health England recommends that in addition to handwashing before eating, and after coughing and sneezing, everyone should also wash hands after using toilets and travelling on public transport.

Watch this short NHS film for guidance:

<https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday), 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday)

Please note, we are currently experiencing high volumes of calls. We appreciate your patience at this time and apologise for any wait that you may experience. To ensure that we answer your calls as quickly as possible, we have now extended our opening hours to cover weekends and are increasing the number of call handlers available to answer your calls.

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

Where to find the latest information

Updates on COVID-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Guidance for educational settings:

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

Guidance for social or community care and residential settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19>

Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

Educational resources:

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

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

Latest Department for Education information:

<https://twitter.com/educationgovuk>

<https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk/>

Please keep your GIAS school contacts up to date

If you work in a school, please take this opportunity to review your contact information in Get Information About Schools (GIAS).

To update your record, please go to the GIAS home page, “Sign in” using your “DfE Sign-in” credentials and select GIAS from your available services here:

<https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>