



Transforming Futures TRUST

HR Guidance Document: Covid-19 related absence

(Date: 9 March 2021)

Introduction

Transforming Futures Trust (the Trust) are committed to supporting all employees and will take proactive steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the workforce and our students. Led by government guidance and our internal safety controls and operational requirements, we have introduced guidance within this document that sets out our expectations of staff and provides information on what to do should you become directly affected by Covid-19 (Coronavirus).

Purpose

This HR note provides an updated version of the Coronavirus HR Guidance, specifically in relation to absence reporting and pay for Coronavirus related absence. The document covers a variety of questions from a HR perspective and should be read in conjunction with national government guidance. This guidance is subject to change and will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to the national effort to combat Coronavirus.

Absence Reporting Procedure (Covid Related absence)

Employees who are absent from work for a Coronavirus related reason should report their absence in accordance with normal sickness reporting procedures in line with the Managing Sickness and Absence Policy. In the first instance, you should notify your line manager (or the School Administrator) as soon as possible and inform them of the reason you are self-isolating. They will then discuss with you the different options available and whether it is appropriate for you to work from home. Working from home will be introduced in the first instance (where staff are able to/have the facility to), for the duration of your self-isolation period. Approval to work from home must be sought from either your line manager and/or the Head of the school.

You should self-isolate if:

- you have any symptoms of coronavirus and contact the NHS 111 telephone contact number to arrange a test.

Symptoms include:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Symptom's determination will be in line with Government/local authority guidance.

- you have tested positive for coronavirus – this means you have coronavirus
- you live with someone who has symptoms and/or tested positive
- someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive
- you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- you arrive in the UK from a country with a high coronavirus risk (for info on list of countries this applies to visit [www. GOV.UK](http://www.GOV.UK)).

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result must stay at home for the full isolation period.

Testing in Schools

Asymptomatic testing has been introduced to help stop the spread of Covid19 and to help schools to operate as safely as possible. Staff will be offered home test kits to be taken on a twice weekly basis.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) or Antigen testing involves the processing of nasal and throat samples with a Lateral Flow Device. These tests deliver a result in 30 minutes.

If your LFD test is positive, you will need to take a further 'PCR test' (Polymerase Chain Reaction) to confirm the positive result. You will need to contact your line manager and HR as soon as possible to inform us of the PCR test result, if this test positive, you will need to self-isolate for a minimum of ten days.

If the Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test is undertaken at a public testing centre or in a school test site, there is no need for a Polymer Chain Reaction (PCR) test to confirm the positive result.

Positive LFD tests conducted at home will require a confirmatory PCR test and the person who has tested positive should arrange for a PCR test as soon as possible. If your PCR test is positive, you will need to contact the base lead as soon as possible, and isolate for the ten-day period.

If the PCR test is negative, then the person and their household can stop isolating.

After testing positive, you can return to your normal routine and stop self-isolating after ten full days if your symptoms have gone, or if the only symptoms you have are a cough or anosmia, which can last for several weeks. If you still have a high temperature after ten days or are otherwise unwell, stay at home and seek medical advice.

If you are isolating because of a positive test result but did not have any symptoms, and you develop Covid-19 symptoms within your isolation period, start a new ten-day isolation period by counting ten full days from the day following your symptom onset.

For staff who may have one of the above symptoms, however, do not believe their symptom is Coronavirus related and they want to work; then an assessment will be

conducted to determine any risk or control measure and next steps will be agreed with line manager and/or Head Teacher. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

3.1 Suspected or confirmed case within school setting

If a member of staff has had contact with someone with symptoms, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. When a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for ten days and arrange to have a test to see if they have Coronavirus. As detailed above, household members should self-isolate for ten days. Where the child, young person, or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Where the child, young person, or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group will need to self-isolate.

The other household members of that wider class or group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person, or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms. Anyone displaying symptoms should arrange to have a test.

Pay and Absence recording for employees self-isolating

If you must self-isolate for a Coronavirus related reason, you are required to provide evidence that you have been advised to self-isolate due to Coronavirus. This evidence must be in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your Coronavirus test result/ or NHS test and test isolation and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate.

4.1 Quick Links

Once the documentation is received, we will process your absence and pay as follows (*for quick access select/click link from list below*):

- a) [If you have symptoms and/or have tested positive for coronavirus and are unfit to work/unable to work from home.](#)
- b) [If you have symptoms and/or have tested positive for coronavirus, are fit to work, and can work from home.](#)
- c) [If you live with someone who has symptoms and/or who has tested positive and can work from home.](#)
- d) [If you live with someone who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you are not able to work from home.](#)
- e) [You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependant who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you can work from home.](#)

- f) [You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependant who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you are not able to work from home.](#)
- g) [You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependant who has to stay at home because their bubble or class group has closed, and you are able to work from home.](#)
- h) [You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependant who has to stay at home because their bubble or class group has closed, and you are unable to work from home.](#)
- i) [Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive and can work from home.](#)
- j) [You are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and you cannot work from home.](#)
- k) [You arrive in the UK from another country and can work from home.](#)
- l) [You arrive in the UK from another country and cannot work from home.](#)

Section 5. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (Shielding)

- a) [If you are CEV/shielding and able to work from home](#)
- b) [If you are shielding and not able to work from home.](#)
- c) [If you live with someone who is actively shielding and can work from home.](#)
- d) [If you live with someone who is actively shielding and are not able to work from home.](#)
- e) [If you are clinically vulnerable/ moderate risk](#)
- f) [Where someone in the household is awaiting surgery and other members of household are required to self-isolate.](#)
- g) [Maternity and Covid](#)

4.1a) If you have symptoms and/or have tested positive for coronavirus and are unfit to work/unable to work from home.

You can self-certify for the first seven days of absence. After seven days you will need to provide evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate to the HR Team for this absence to be authorised. You will be paid in accordance with the Trust's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy. You will be recorded as sick for this period.

4.1b) If you have symptoms and/or have tested positive for coronavirus, are fit to work,

and can work from home.

You will arrange with your line manager what work will be done at home, frequency of contact and hours. You will be paid as normal for the period you are self-isolating. If you develop symptoms and become unfit to work, then you will be processed and paid in accordance with the Trust's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy.

You will need to provide evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate to the HR Team.

4.1 c) If you live with someone who has symptoms and/or who has tested positive and can work from home.

If you live with someone that has tested positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days.

In this instance, the expectation is that you will work from home, if your role permits this, for the period of self-isolation and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If you are in a role that enables you to work from home then we will provide you with the IT kit and equipment to enable you to work from home, and you will need to agree with your line manager your workload, frequency of contact and hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate to the HR Team for this absence to be authorised.

4.1d) If you live with someone who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you are not able to work from home.

Your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation and paid in accordance with Trust's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1e) You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependent who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you can work from home.

The expectation is that you will work from home for the period of self-isolation if your role permits this and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to agree with your line manager the following: your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate to the HR Team for this absence to be authorised.

4.1f) You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependent who has symptoms and/or tested positive and you are not able to work from home.

Your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation. You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1g) You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependent who has to stay at home because their bubble or class group has closed, and you are able to work from home.

The expectation is that you will work from home for the period of self-isolation if your role permits this and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to agree with your line manager the following: your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates and/or a self-isolation certificate to the HR Team for this absence to be authorised.

4.1h) You are a parent, guardian or carer and have a dependent who has to stay at home because their bubble or class group has closed, and therefore if you are unable to work from home.

Your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation and paid in accordance with Trust's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1i) Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or tested positive and you can work from home.

The expectation is that you will work from home for the period of self-isolation if your role permits this and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to agree with your line manager the following: your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1j) You're told to self-isolate by NHS Test.

The expectation is that you will work from home for the period of self-isolation if your role permits this and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to agree with your line manager the following: your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

If you are unable to work from home, and your role requires you to be in school, your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1k) You arrive in the UK from another country and can work from home.

Under current UK Covid-19 restrictions, you must not travel internationally, unless you have a legally permitted reason to do so. On your return to the UK, you will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

If you can, you will work from home for the period of self-isolation and be paid as normal for hours worked. You will need to agree with your line manager your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

4.1l) You arrive in the UK from another country and cannot work from home.

Staff are not entitled to SSP if they're self-isolating after returning from holiday from another country and they cannot work from home.

Any isolation period upon return to the UK will be taken as a period of unpaid leave if home working is not an option.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and Clinically Vulnerable (CV)

Coronavirus can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher. There are 2 levels of higher risk categories: high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable), and moderate risk (clinically vulnerable)

5.1 If you have a serious underlying health condition and are in the high-risk group.

CEV classification (also known as shielding) is a measure to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable by minimising all interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. The Trust will offer support to all staff shielding, who are at very high risk of severe illness from Coronavirus because of an underlying health condition (listed below) or for staff who care for/live with an extremely vulnerable person.

The shielding measures will apply across the whole of England until at least 31 March.

There are 3 ways you may be identified as clinically extremely vulnerable:

- You have one or more of the conditions listed below.
- Your clinician or GP has added you to the Shielded Patient List because, based on their clinical judgement, they deem you to be at high risk of serious illness if you catch Covid.
- You have been identified through the COVID-19 Population Risk Assessment as potentially being at high risk of serious illness if you catch the virus.

Underlying serious health conditions include:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- people with specific cancers:
- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
- people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
- people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease)
- people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection
- problems with your spleen, for example splenectomy (having your spleen removed)
- adults with Down's syndrome
- adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (stage 5)
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decisions
- Pregnant women from 28 weeks' gestation, or with underlying health conditions at any gestation.

Staff in the CEV category must work from home and not attend work.

For staff in the CEV category that wish to remain in work, a CEV risk assessment will be completed for the member of staff with a view to ensuring that every practical step possible is taken to ensure they are safe at work.

When the risk assessment has been completed, it will be the decision of the Head Teacher whether the staff can remain in work or not. If the risk is too high or unmanageable then we may refer the member of staff to their GP for further guidance and to be 'certified fit to work.'

5.1 Pay and absence reporting for employees shielding

If you are advised to shield by the NHS or a health professional:

- You will need to notify your line manager immediately
- You will need to submit your letter from the NHS confirming your requirement to 'shield' because of a serious underlying health condition to the HR department for your absence to be authorised. This document will enable the Trust to process any pay entitlement you may be due (where staff are unable to work from home – see below).

5.1a) If you are CEV/shielding and able to work from home

You will work from home for the period of self-isolation and be paid as normal for hours worked. You will need to agree with your line manager your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

You will need to submit your letter from the NHS confirming your requirement to 'shield' because of a serious underlying health condition to the HR department for your absence to be authorised.

5.1b) If you are shielding and not able to work from home.

Further to receipt of your NHS/medical practitioner letter or certificate for the period you are self-isolating (NHS 111):

Your absence will be processed, and you will be paid for your hours as normal. You will need to submit your letter from the NHS confirming your requirement to 'shield' because of a serious underlying health condition to the HR department for your absence to be authorised.

5.1c) If you live with someone who is actively shielding

People who live with those who are clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable can attend the workplace unless advised otherwise by an individual letter from the NHS or a specialist doctor.

If you live with someone who is shielding, employees can attend work. A risk assessment will be carried out with the individual and safety measures such as regular thorough handwashing and maintaining 2 metre distance from others where possible should be followed. Where 2 metres is not possible, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others and wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as an additional, optional measure where PPE is not normally required for the role.

If you have any questions following your risk assessment, or do not feel that it has covered your concerns, please contact a member of the HR team.

5.1c) If you live with someone who is actively shielding and have been advised by the

NHS/ Specialist Doctor to remain at home and can work from home.

In the first instance you will work from home for the period of self-isolation and be paid as normal for hours worked.

You will need to agree with your line manager your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home. You will need to submit a copy of the NHS/medical practitioner letter or certificate that has been issued to your relative/dependant to the HR Team for this absence to be authorised.

5.1d) If you live with someone who is actively shielding and have been advised by the NHS/ Specialist Doctor to remain at home, and you are not able to work from home.

Your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation and paid in accordance with Trust's Managing Sickness and Absence Policy.

You will need to submit evidence in the form of either a copy or screenshot of your relative's Coronavirus test result and/or any appointments or medical certificates for this absence to be authorised.

5.1e) If you are clinically vulnerable/ moderate risk

People at moderate risk from coronavirus include people who:

- are 70 or older
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema, or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)
- are pregnant (under 28 weeks)

If you are at moderate risk from Coronavirus, you will not receive a letter from the NHS asking you to shield. Employees in this category can attend work.

A risk assessment will be carried out with the individual by their line manager to identify any additional safety measures that can be put in place. It is important to follow current advice on regular thorough handwashing and maintaining 2 metre distance from others where possible should be followed. Where 2 metres is not possible, you should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others and wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as an additional, optional measure where PPE is not normally required for the role.

If you have any questions following your risk assessment, or do not feel that it has covered your concerns, please contact a member of the HR team.

5.1f) Where someone in the household is awaiting surgery and other members of household are required to self-isolate.

The expectation is that you will work from home for the period of self-isolation if your role permits this and be paid as normal for hours worked. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to agree with your line manager the following: your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

If you are unable to work from home, and your role requires you to be in school, your absence will be recorded as sickness for the duration of your period of self-isolation

You will need to submit your letter or your relatives' letter from the NHS or their medical practitioner confirming your requirement to 'shield' to the HR department for your absence to be authorised.

5.1g) Maternity and Covid.

Following Government and NHS guidance, pregnant women have been placed in the 'at moderate risk' group- Clinically vulnerable.

Whilst in this group, you are able to attend work as usual, but a risk assessment will be carried out by your line manager to identify any additional safety measures that can be put in place.

Other advice and recommendations for people in this group are to follow current advice on regular thorough handwashing and to maintain a 2 metre distance from others where possible.

Where 2 metres is not possible, you should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of others and wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as an additional, optional measure where PPE is not normally required for the role.

After 28 weeks, you will then fall into the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) category. This is because, although pregnant women of any gestation are at no more risk of contracting the virus than any other non-pregnant person who is in similar health, for those women who are 28 weeks pregnant and beyond there is an increased risk of becoming severely ill, and of pre-term birth, should they contract Covid.

You will work from home for the period of shielding and be paid as normal for hours worked. You will need to agree with your line manager your workload, frequency of contact and your hours whilst working at home.

If you have been identified as high risk (CEV) as you have underlying health conditions, and the NHS has contacted you to shield, you will need to inform your line manager immediately and send a copy of your shielding note to the HR team. You will work from home for the period of self-isolation and be paid as normal for hours worked.

Returning to Work

On your return to work from a Coronavirus related absence (you had symptoms and/or tested positive for Coronavirus) your line manager will conduct a personal risk assessment with you prior to your return. If you have any questions following your risk assessment, or do not feel that it has covered your concerns, please contact a member of the HR team.

Coronavirus Outbreak (site, local or national)

Where the Trust are aware of two or more staff or students testing positively for coronavirus at a School, individual site and/or more widely across Trust, region or nationally; the Executive Committee and Heads of Schools will communicate to all staff and students in accordance with this. The Trust will also follow all guidance in line with Public Health England and the Government guidelines.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Should you feel you need for additional support at this time then our Healthcare provider (HealthShield) offer a counselling service along with other services that may be helpful to you. They can be contacted on the number below.

Employee Assistance Programme

Telephone: 0800 028 1963

Further Information

Further Information and guidance can be found:

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-sites/> (NHS)

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> (NHS 111)

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-vulnerable-people>

(COVID-19 Advice for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people)

<https://www.gov.uk/> (Gov.UK)