

COVID-19 Employee Factsheet

Updated as at: 10 March 2020

Many organisations, including the University of Chichester Academy Trust ('the Trust'), have been considering the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on employees in light of the emerging picture. Whilst it is not possible to predict the future evolution of the coronavirus and how it may impact staff, the Trust is following all UK Government advice, which can change depending on the perceived risk at a given point.

These guidelines are not intended to duplicate what may have already been communicated within the Schools, but rather to provide practical advice relating to contractual and workplace obligations. This factsheet will be updated as further advice is received.

We also recommend you visit the government website link below, which provides guidance for an educational setting regarding COVID-19.

["https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19"](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19)

The following provides answers to some of the questions you may be thinking about, and we invite you to email any further questions you may have to unicathr@chi.ac.uk, or speak with your Headteacher.

As an employee am I required to follow the Trust's advice on coronavirus?

You should follow the advice of your Headteacher who is the Trust leader in your school. The Trust and your Headteacher are in constant communication with each other to ensure up-to-date information received for schools are shared and to ensure you are kept up to date. The health and wellbeing of pupils, staff and the surrounding community is of utmost importance.

What responsibility do I have for my health and safety?

Employees also have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of both themselves and others who may be affected by their acts (or indeed omissions) at work. The safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils is paramount; the school and the Trust has a duty to protect the health and safety of employees and is continuously monitoring the situation for further changes.

It is good practice to make sure everyone adopts good hygiene measures and follows the advice provided.

What happens if I find myself in a situation where I am required to self-isolate or quarantine?

If you have received medical advice to self-isolate, you should not attend work and you should notify your Headteacher without delay by 'phone and/or email.

If you are self-isolating but have not developed symptoms of the virus, your absence will be treated as working from home for the period of your containment. This may include work you would not normally undertake whilst at school, but is equivalent to your salary grade. Where possible, employees should consider alternative ways of working such as using video or telephone conferencing facilities to replace face-to-face meetings and remain in contact via 'phone/email.

You should provide your contact details and keep in regular contact during your period of self-isolation.

You will not be required to come on to school premises for the duration of the isolation/quarantine and you should self-isolate or quarantine for the time required.

Can the Trust or the School take steps to prevent an employee who has refused to self-isolate from coming onto school premises or coming into contact with other employees and pupils?

Yes. The Trust/School must bear in mind the duties they owe other employees or students under UK Health and Safety legislation. If the Trust/School knowingly allows an individual who has been advised to self-isolate to attend their premises, or come in to contact with other employees, they may be in breach of those duties, particularly where other employees and/or pupils are more vulnerable to infection – for example, pregnant employees, those with long-term health conditions.

Will I receive my normal pay if I am required to self-isolate or quarantine?

Yes. If an employee is not sick but cannot attend their workplace because they are in self-isolation or quarantine, they will continue to receive their normal salary and their terms and conditions of employment will continue to apply.

Employees should let their Headteacher or a member of the senior management team know without delay if they are not able to attend the workplace, and are required to self-isolate or go in to quarantine.

Will my Sickness Absence policy apply if someone has coronavirus?

Yes. The Sickness absence policy applies if you are off-sick due to coronavirus.

An employee who is following official medical guidance to self-isolate and who has flu-like symptoms may be unable to obtain a Fitness for Work note – for example, because their local GP will not see anyone with coronavirus symptoms or those who have been to particular geographic areas.

Absence from work should be recorded in the usual way when absent due to sickness.

I have a member of staff who wants to self-isolate but they do not have any medical grounds or advice to do so. What should I do?

Some people might feel they do not want to go to work or travel to work if they're afraid of catching coronavirus. Whilst managers should listen and respond to any concerns staff may have, there are no reasons currently why staff should not attend work.

Where a member of staff refuses to attend work and there are no grounds or medical reasons why they cannot attend work, formal procedures may be instigated.

I am a manager and a member of my team has confirmed they are self-isolating following medical advice, what should I do and who should I inform?

Managers should inform the individual not to come into work and to follow medical advice. Managers should then contact their Headteacher or a member of the senior management team without delay.

Headteachers to record absences and submit on a weekly/daily basis using the Trust template to Unicat@chi.ac.uk This will help to closely monitor incidences and take the most appropriate actions.

What can managers/Heads/staff communicate about an employee with coronavirus?

Under UK data protection law, personal data concerning health is 'special category data'. This means the Schools and the Trust need to ensure any communication does not include data about the individual who is absent. For example, while it would be fine to let employees know there has been a confirmed coronavirus case within its workforce, it would not be appropriate to provide any details from which the individual might be identified. Therefore, all managers/staff are required to remain discrete and to respond sensitively to the individual concerned, whilst respecting the individual's privacy and UK data protection law requirements.

My GP has explicitly told me not to attend work due to my partner being confirmed with suspected/diagnosis of coronavirus. My partner is also self-isolating. What shall I do?

You should follow medical advice and not come into work. Contact your Headteacher or manager without delay outlining the circumstances, confirming you are required to self-isolate. You should follow medical advice and self-isolate for the required time.

What is the advice if I have to travel on School or Trust business?

The Trust is following UK Government policy with regards to travelling on business. The current guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will be regularly updated to reflect the emerging situation. Employees will not be required to travel on School or Trust business if this would conflict with government advice.

What will happen if the school is forced to close.

Decisions regarding school closure are that of the headteacher, unless instructed to do so by an appropriate agency. We are committed to keep operating as normally as possible for as long as possible and may include the need to work in another location within reasonable distance from your school. If all schools are closed you will still be considered as working according to your normal working hours and days. Your Manager or Headteacher will discuss what this may look like for you.

What should I do if I am planning to travel for a personal trip?

Whilst the School and the Trust is not responsible for you on personal trips, we strongly recommend you follow the advice and guidance found on the FCO website at all times. This includes advice on whether it is safe to travel to a particular country, advice on health and security, including advice on coronavirus and advice on what to do when returning from a trip, e.g. whether it is necessary to self-isolate for example.

Before you go on a trip you should speak with your line manager and prepare for the possibility that you may need to self-isolate on your return. On your return you should check the current status for self-isolation before returning to work.

The NHS and World Health Organization also provide advice whilst travelling during the coronavirus outbreak. Links below:

FCO Website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

WHO Website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>

NHS Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-travellers/>

My Child's school is temporarily closed and I need to take some time away from work to look after them – what shall I do?

The Trust understands the difficulties that may be encountered when having to cover a situation such as this, which may require short notice. You should consider this in the same way as you manage any periods of time that your child is not at school and put in place alternative arrangements.

The Trust operates a policy of 'special leave' to cover 'emergencies' where an employee has to attend to an urgent domestic incident, or problems affecting themselves or a dependant. Requests will be given full and sympathetic consideration, but the Trust/School reserves the right to refuse any such request where it is felt that it is inappropriate.

Special leave in this context will usually be only for a day or two, but you should discuss and agree with your manager/headteacher the most appropriate course of action, which may include temporary working-at-home arrangements or taking a period of annual leave. Managers will approach any such requests in a consistent manner, ensuring fairness and equity in decision-making.

Where can I find further information?

Further information can be found on-line via the Trust's Website:

<https://www.unicat.org.uk/home>

Government guidance for educational settings:

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

Government advice on self-isolation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation>

Public Health England advice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Government Foreign Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Where will this document be available?

Advice on handling coronavirus at work will be updated as required and it will be published on the Trust's website. Hard copies can be provided where required.