

## Coronavirus FAQs

### Messages for parents and carers

This list of frequently asked questions is intended as a resource for school staff to use when they are asked for information from parents and carers.

This is intended to be a co-produced document and will be updated regularly. Any questions that you think would be good to address can be added – just pass them on to us. We will send out updates as they are produced (through Naomi Marquis in Public Health and Debby Simpson in the Schools and Learning Team), so please make sure you are using the latest version. **Any changes to the previous version will be highlighted in red text.**

A reminder – the latest national guidance will always be available at:

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

The national guidance contains advice on the following:

- 1) Information about the virus
- 2) How COVID-19 is spread
- 3) Preventing spread of infection
- 4) What to do if children, pupils, students or staff become unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 (either through travel to a specified country or area or contact with a confirmed case)
- 5) What to do if a case of COVID-19 (pupil, student or staff) is suspected in your childcare or education setting
- 6) What to do if a case of COVID-19 (pupil, student or staff) is confirmed in your childcare or education setting
- 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
- 8) What to do if pupils, students or staff in your childcare or educational setting have travelled from any Category 1 specified country/area in the past 14 days
- 9) What to do if a pupil, student or staff member has travelled from a Category 2 specified country/area in the last 14 days
- 10) What to do if pupils, students or staff return from travel anywhere else in the world within the last 14 days
- 11) School trips

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- 12) What to do with post, packages or food sent from specified countries/areas within the last 14 days
- 13) How to clean educational establishments where there were children, students or staff with suspected cases of COVID-19
- 14) What to do with rubbish in the educational establishment, including tissues, if children, students or staff become unwell with suspected COVID-19
- 15) Tools for use in childcare and educational settings

The best way you can help avoid the risk of infection in your school is by keeping up to date with the guidance above. It's quite comprehensive and covers most scenarios – but Public Health is here to answer any additional questions if you have them. The most important thing you can do is ensure your pupils wash their hands properly and regularly, and if they are sneezing or coughing to reinforce the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' message.

Key contacts for schools, should you have any questions:

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- Q) My child has just come back from [name of Country]. They're fine, should they come to school?**
- A) It depends on which country they have travelled from. Check the most up to date advice at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk). If they have travelled from a 'Category 1' country they shouldn't come into school and should self-isolate for 14 days. They should also have called NHS 111 for advice. If they have travelled from a 'Category 2' country and don't have any symptoms they are OK to come to school. However if they then develop and symptoms they should be withdrawn from school, self-isolate and seek advice from NHS 111.
- Q) My child has come back from a 'Category 2' country and doesn't have any symptoms. What happens if that country becomes a 'Category 1' country later in the week?**
- A) Parents should be given the current national guidance. We can't predict what will happen in the future so we have to ensure we are doing the right thing at a particular point in time. In this instance, for example, the current advice would be that the child is fine to come to school (but that if they develop any symptoms they should be withdrawn and seek advice from NHS 111).
- Q) My child is fine but dad is a pilot and has just flown back from a 'Category 2' country. Should my child come to school?**
- A) If dad is fine and has no symptoms the child should be fine too. However if dad has symptoms he should contact NHS 111 and seek advice. The child is safe to come to school unless dad is confirmed as having coronavirus after being tested – in which case the child should self-isolate for 14 days from that point.
- Q) I've read in the paper that schools will be closing. Does this apply to our school?**
- A) There are lots of stories in the papers of things that might happen in the future. However our school won't be closing unless we receive guidance to do so – either nationally or from local health experts.
- Q) I'm worried my child might have been in touch with someone who has Coronavirus – what should I do?**
- A) If you know they have been in close contact (15 minutes or more within 2 metres) with someone who has a confirmed diagnosis of Coronavirus you should call NHS 111 and the child should self-isolate for 14 days. If you're worried that you might have been in contact with someone with Coronavirus, NHS 111 is still the best number to call. If your child doesn't have any

symptoms and the person they have been in touch with is not a confirmed case then the child is fine to come to school.

**Q) My child has been at school all week but has just tested positive for Coronavirus and I just wanted to let you know.**

A) In this scenario it is highly likely a Public Health professional would be in touch with the school to discuss contact tracing. However if this hasn't happened, and it definitely is a confirmed case, contact the Public Health team immediately for advice.

**Q) I've heard a child has symptoms of Coronavirus and has been sent home. What does that mean for my child?**

We are following national guidance. When a child has symptoms and has either been abroad to an affected country or has been in close contact with someone with Coronavirus we are advised that they should be sent home from school for two weeks and should be tested. At present we have no known cases of Coronavirus in the school. If we were to have a case we would discuss with Public Health officials, who would advise us on contacting parents.

**Q) I've heard a child has symptoms of Coronavirus and has been sent home. My wife is immunocompromised, and I'm worried you're putting her health at risk.**

A) We're following national guidance by ensuring that where our pupils are at risk they are excluded from school for two weeks and get tested. By doing so we are doing our best to minimise any risk of spreading Coronavirus in our school. However if your wife is worried they can contact NHS 111 for advice.

**Q) I'm worried about my child getting Coronavirus so I'm keeping them off school. Can you authorise their absence for me?**

A) There is no reason for your child not to be at school. The only reason for keeping them off school is if the national guidance indicates it. It's up to individual schools how they choose to respond to the request for absence authorisation.

**Q) There is a child in my child's class who I know is self-isolating. I'm worried my child will pick up Coronavirus from surfaces at the school. Have you done a deep clean?**

A) The most important thing is that at the moment we don't have any confirmed cases of Coronavirus in our school. Any children whose family have taken the decision to self-isolate have done so either because they are following guidance to do so or because they have made that choice themselves. Current national guidance suggests that cleaning any surfaces in the school where a child who may have Coronavirus is likely to come into contact with using approved household detergents is sufficient. We would be advised by

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Public Health professionals if we did need to undertake a deep clean, but that is not the national policy at the moment.

- Q) You should have hand sanitiser at every entrance to school, so visitors like me can clean our hands. It's the law.**
- A) Welfare Regulations state that legally we have to ensure wash facilities are available to visitors. We have warm water and soap available to all our visitors and national guidance is that effective washing with warm water and soap is the best way of preventing the spread of Coronavirus (and other bugs).