

Headteachers' Update

The 5 O'Clock Update For Schools

Managing Covid Symptoms and Cases

Alongside our local authority public health colleagues, we have updated the support and guidance for schools and settings which is recorded in the attached flow chart. It explains what to do for symptomatic and confirmed Covid 19 cases and also includes support for responding to any other queries you may have. The first task for symptomatic and confirmed cases is to inform the LA Public Health Team via the linked webform. Our in-house team have the resources to respond to you quickly, which Public Health England did not have the capacity to do with some early cases. The flow chart also contains guidance to help you to begin to manage cases yourself when time is short.

Early Lessons Learnt-

The schools who have had confirmed cases of Covid on their sites have all managed the situations exceptionally well. They have also fed back some of their learning. When a positive case is confirmed the school must identify all the 'close contacts' of that person. There are three categories of close contact

- 1) Direct face to face contact for any length of time
- 2) Within 1m for 1 minute or more
- 3) Within 2m for 15 minutes or more.

Identified close contacts must self-isolate for 14 days. As a result, social distancing, where possible, continues to be vital at all times, particularly between staff. It should therefore be rare for staff to be deemed a 'close contact' with other staff.

Bubble sizes are also a challenging area. Methods for keeping bubbles separate, even outdoors at breaktimes, need to be reviewed to keep any possible close contact list as small as possible. In secondary schools where social distancing could be maintained in a classroom or on school transport, seating plans could be vital when identifying those who are close contacts and also importantly those who are not.

Overall, the control measures in school are doing a great job in keeping pupils and staff safe. In addition, further consideration around minimising and being able to identify each individuals 'close contacts' will minimise the disruption to learning and to home lives that positive Covid test results can bring.

The flow chart is available [here](#).

DfE Updates

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): kits for schools and FE providers](#)

Page summary - Guidance for schools and further education (FE) providers on the initial supply of coronavirus (COVID-19) home testing kits for pupils, teachers and staff.

Change made - Updated information on ordering test kits and clarification of wording for different age group test use.

[Guidance for schools: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Page summary - What school leaders, teachers and school staff need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made - Added 'Responsibility for autumn exams'. This includes information about the DfE exams support service about paying for exam fees, booking alternative sites and booking exam invigilation.

[Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Page summary - What all schools will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term.

Change made - Added updated version of 'What to do if a pupil is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Page summary - What childcare services early years settings, childminders and local authorities need to provide during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made - Added updated version of 'What to do if a child is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

[Providing school meals during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Page summary - Guidance for schools and local authorities on school meals arrangements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made - Updated the guidance on the temporary extension of free school meals eligibility to NRPF groups. This update removes references to the Covid Summer Food Fund and COVID-19 specific terminology.

Update on DfE scheme for devices for children open to social work and care leavers

The DfE have updated the guidance in relation to this scheme and have now made it possible for local authorities to gift the devices allocated to them for this cohort of children to schools. Northumberland have decided this is the most sensible thing to do. We have some further devices to distribute and will be getting in touch with schools over the coming days to advise them of which children have been identified as needing a device. We are now considering all the devices we have so far given out and ones to be given out as belonging to the school they have been given to although still to prioritise being given to the children open to social work identified as needing a device. The DfE have alerted us that the safeguarding software they have installed has been extended to the end of September 2021 after which time it will be schools' responsibility to ensure appropriate software is in place on the devices.

We have sent out some laptops through the social workers over the summer holidays and we will let the relevant schools for those children know who has received one in the coming weeks.

Covid-19 Control - HSE Potential Questions

The following information was posted on a national headteachers forum by a Head who received a call from an HSE Inspector.

<https://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/HSE-potential-questions-in-relation-to-school-arrangements-.pdf>

Local Authority Staff Absence Teachers and Support Staff Insurance Supply Schemes from Sept 2020

Background

Schools were informed before the end of the Summer Term, that the staff absence insurance schemes would be reinstated with effect from 1 September 2020.

Making a Claim

The 2020/21 Claim Form for the Teachers Scheme is available [HERE](#)

The 2020/21 Claim Form for the Support Staff Scheme is available [HERE](#)

Claim forms should be submitted promptly following the end of each month, please ensure forms are fully completed to ensure that claims can be processed and all due payments made efficiently. No claims that are received more than 2 months after the end of a period will be paid.

Insert your 4 digit School Number preceded by two zeros "00" in the "School No" box. This will prepopulate the School Name and Level of Cover. Complete the rest of the form fully, using the drop down menus for the "Post" and "Reason for Absence" fields. Please ensure you complete the final column, which records the date the absence commenced, which may fall in a preceding period, not necessarily in that month for which a claim is being made. Schools are reminded that the maximum period for which a claim can be made is 12 months.

Rates of Benefit Payment

The Teachers Scheme will pay benefits based on a rate of £25.04 per hour, up to a maximum of 32.5 hours per week, which represents 1 fte, for the purposes of the Scheme. Part Time staff are paid on a pro rata basis.

The Support Staff Scheme will pay benefits based on a rate of £11.31 per hour, up to a maximum of 37 hours per week, which represents 1 fte, for the purposes of the Scheme. Part Time staff are paid on a pro rata basis.

Covid-19 related absences

Given the continuing uncertainty and fluidity in relation to Covid-19, no benefits will be paid in relation to covid-19 related absences, including where staff are self-isolating. Schools are reminded to liaise with their HR advisers in relation to this and that depending on the specific position alternative working arrangements or unpaid leave may be appropriate. If additional costs are incurred due to covid-19 Schools may wish to consider making a claim for these under the exceptional costs associated with coronavirus, in line with the scheme detailed [HERE](#). We are still awaiting information as to the ESFA position on any other costs submitted as part of the July 2020 claim.

For further information please use the dedicated email address : insurance.supply@northumberland.gov.uk.