

Sickness, Absence and Quarantine Procedures in Response to Covid-19 Pandemic

In all relevant cases outlined below, the School will refer to information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on their website. Quarantine rules apply to both destination countries and those you may have travelled through.

1. If a member of staff goes abroad knowing, on departure, that they will need to quarantine on their return resulting in them not being available for work at the appropriate time, the absence will result in pay being withheld during that period. In this situation, the member of staff will have knowingly put themselves in the position where they definitely cannot (*unless there is the rare occurrence of quarantine rules being lifted whilst they are away, which cannot be assumed or expected*) return to work as required by their contract. A formal warning of misconduct will be issued by the Principal. It should also be noted that the School cannot support a breaking of quarantine rules in order for the member of staff to return to work earlier to avoid this loss of pay or disciplinary action.
2. If a member of staff goes abroad to a country where, on departure, they do not expect to have to quarantine on return, the School considers them to have travelled with a degree of good faith. However, in the current context, this travel is still considered to be a risk as it is widely publicised that only essential travel should be conducted and that quarantine rules can be initiated without warning. Therefore, if a quarantine restriction is imposed whilst the member of staff is away, their absence will be paid in line with statutory sick pay only. No formal warning will be issued as the journey was taken with a degree of good faith. Both these arrangements are on the condition that proof of travel date is provided, reflecting that the quarantine rule came into effect after departure. In this situation staff must contact the Principal or School Business Manager immediately. Staff affected will be expected to conduct as much work as possible from home, whilst in quarantine, and - in the case of teaching staff – set cover work for their classes. Where this does not occur, the absence will result in no pay during that period.

(It should be noted that this is in reference to general Covid-19 related travel restrictions only. If another event occurs whilst the member of staff is away – like the ash cloud in 2010, or event only affecting the member of staff including falling ill with Covid-19 completely unexpectedly preventing them from returning to work on time, the absence and pay will be treated in line with the School's normal Absence Policy.)

3. If a member of staff develops symptoms of Covid-19 they must isolate immediately and urgently seek a test at a test centre. Whilst waiting for the test result, pay will be issued in line with our normal absence policy. Subsequently, the following approach will be adopted:
 - If the test is positive, the member of staff must inform the Principal immediately. Regardless of symptoms, the member of staff must remain off school for the time advised by Public Health, and pay will be awarded in line with the School's normal Absence Policy for sickness. Approach to working from home will be as normal for a sickness absence.
 - If the test is negative, but the member of staff continues to feel ill and is therefore absent from school for other sickness reasons - such as a bad cold or flu – then the absence and pay will be approached in line with the School's normal sickness policy. This includes the usual approach to working from home during a sickness absence.
 - If the test is negative and the member of staff feels well enough to return to school they should return immediately in discussion with the Principal or Business Manager. If they fail to do so then normal procedures will be followed.
 - If the member of staff does not seek a Covid-19 test but instead opts to simply isolate for the stated amount of time, despite feeling well enough to return to school and symptoms disappearing, then pay will be withheld for this period. A formal discussion will also be required with the Principal on return to work. It is expected, in line with the School's risk assessment, that all staff exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms, willingly take a test at the earliest opportunity and provide proof of this test and the result to the School. The School can support in arranging this test.
4. If a member of staff is asked to self isolate through the track and trace system – despite exhibiting no symptoms themselves – they must inform the Business Manager immediately in the same way as a normal absence. If proof of this request to isolate is provided the absence will be treated in line with our normal absence procedure. As the member of staff themselves is not ill, the expectation is that all possible duties are conducted from home and, where some of a member of staff's role cannot be conducted remotely, the School reserves the right to request that they take on other remote duties during the period of absence, and this will be reflected in the approach to pay.
5. All non related Covid-19 absences, sickness or otherwise, will be approached as normal, in line with the School's Absence Policy, which states that staff must follow the correct procedure for reporting/requesting absence.

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These procedures will be reviewed as national guidance is amended.