



HR ADVICE UPDATE FOR SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

September 2020



The following advice is based on the current guidance from the UK Government, Local Government Association, and from Local Authorities where it has been able to ascertain what has been sent to schools.

This **DOES NOT** cover all eventualities and scenarios, and Headteachers and Senior Leaders are asked to direct all relevant queries to the lead HR adviser for the authority. The details of who leads on which authority along with contact details can be found at the end of the paper.

1. Lockdown has continued to be eased during the summer break. What happens when a member of staff says they don't want to work or is anxious about coming to work in September?

Where a member of staff has anxiety around working and doesn't want to, you should meet with them and discuss the causes of the anxiety and their concerns. Share the risk assessments that you have in place for School operation from September. If they have ongoing medical conditions and have been shielding, prepare an individual risk assessment for them. An occupational Health review may be useful. Consider any possible adjustments or possible role changes, increased levels of PPE etc that may help alleviate their concerns. If you have access to an employee assistance programme or mental health support refer them to those services as well.

Where these measures do not help easing their anxiety then they should apply for special leave. Whether this is paid or not, or half paid is at the discretion of management and decisions should be taken on a case by case basis.

Where the level of anxiety is such that they are off signed off sick, then they are off sick.

2. We have staff that are caught in quarantine after the summer, what should we do?

The potential need for people to quarantine after holidays abroad has been part of the Government's strategy for dealing with the Pandemic since June. While employees will hopefully have timed holidays so as to ensure that their return from foreign holidays would provide the chance to complete any potential two week quarantine before the start of term, the ever changing list of countries for whom it applies means that having staff in this situation is likely.

Where staff inform you that they are in quarantine unless they are able to work from home they should apply for special leave using the schools proforma, providing evidence of their travel arrangements. Whether this is paid or not, or half paid is at the discretion of management and decisions should be taken on a case by case basis.

3. I have staff members who need to quarantine for 14 days due to contact with someone with COVID-19.

It may be possible that a quarantining staff member can work from home so that could be considered.

However, for staff who cannot work at home we would advise that staff should apply for special leave using the schools proforma, providing evidence of their requirement to quarantine. Whether this is paid or not, or half paid is at the discretion of management and decisions should be taken on a case by case basis.

4. Staff are saying that they are having issues with childcare

Members of staff with childcare issues should apply for parental leave using the schools application form, and follow the School's Policy.

5. How can we support staff with anxiety and mental health issues at this time?

If schools have an employee assistance programme that can be used by staff, as well as publicly available sources like Education Support <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

HR Team Roles and LA Leads

HR Team Member	Role	Lead for	Contact Details
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