

Internal Advice for Schools and Early Years Settings on Novel Coronavirus (2019 n-CoV)

VERSION 3

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For the latest information go to

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

What is different in this guidance?

- Guidance on who should not report to work
- The basis of our planning – if cases increase significantly
- Clarification on government statement of 10th February

For urgent advice in school and early years settings

This is a rapidly changing situation and further information may be issued as we know more. It is possible guidance may change, so it is important, if you have a suspected case, to telephone the following for advice:-

- NHS 111 or
- Public Health England Local Health Protection Team on 0300 303 8537 option 1

The basis for our planning

You will have seen the media coverage on the spread of the new coronavirus, a virus of the same family of viruses as the type which caused the SARS (Serious Acquired Respiratory Syndrome) worldwide outbreak in 2002-2003

At the time of writing there are eight cases in the UK. We expect there to be more. **We do not know at the time of writing** whether we will or won't have a major outbreak which disrupts business continuity in the same way as a pandemic would. It is too early to say at the time of writing whether the virus will create a global pandemic or whether we will have relatively few cases in the UK.

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We will be planning on the basis of pandemic ‘flu planning for this. You may receive further communications on this from business continuity and resilience teams in your Directorate.

Government statement of 10th February 2020

Government stated on 10th February 2020 that coronavirus presented “ an imminent threat” . This was a legal device to enable it to take specific legal measures to help control cases and infection. We remain at the time of writing in a period of trying to contain spread. The risk to most individuals in the UK has not significantly worsened.

Reporting for Work or school and travel guidance

Anyone who has returned from any of these countries within the last fourteen days should follow the action below:-

Criteria	Anyone who has had the following exposure	Exclusion from work until 14 days after last exposure?	Key actions
1	Travelled to Hubei province (which includes Wuhan)	Yes	Self isolate at home and ring NHS 111
2	Contact with a known case of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)	Yes	Self isolate at home and ring NHS 111
3	Attended or worked in hospitals or healthcare settings anywhere in China , Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Thailand, Republic of Korea, Malaysia or Taiwan, (eg	Yes	Self isolate at home and call NHS111

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Criteria	Anyone who has had the following exposure	Exclusion from work until 14 days after last exposure?	Key actions
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	working in healthcare, admission or visit to hospital)		
4	Travelled to China , Macao, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Thailand, Republic of Korea, Taiwan or Malaysia, but not meeting any of the exposure criteria 1, 2 or 3	No	Do not return to work until advice has been taken from NHS 111.

The advice for staff who have travelled to the areas above recently and who have symptoms compatible with coronavirus (see below) is the same as for other members of the public - **call NHS 111**.

Staff, parents or children who share a home with someone with symptoms

Staff who share a home with someone who has symptoms should be excluded from work and take advice from NHS111 before returning to work.

What does Self-isolation mean?

Follow the advice on self isolation here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-self-isolation-for-patients-undergoing-testing/advice-sheet-home-isolation> if you or someone you manage is required to self-isolate.

Please do not be alarmed by these measures. They are precautionary and are designed to minimise any chance of spreading the virus.

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What is the outbreak?

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organisation was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, China. The cause is now identified as a Coronavirus, one of the family of viruses which caused the SARS (Serious Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2002-2003 across the world. These viruses are fairly common, and can range from mild to very severe in effect. The virus is now called Novel Coronavirus 2019 or 2019-nCoV.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and latest updates can be found on the Gov.uk website [here](#)

- For the public <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>
- For professionals <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information>

How concerned should we be in UK?

While there is as yet no cause for concern to the UK and risk to the UK is currently moderate and has been raised from low. This is to allow planning. It is probably there could be cases in the UK at some point. There is no cause for alarm and media reports suggesting this virus is of similar severity to Ebola are extremely inaccurate and unhelpful.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms range from cold like symptoms to body aches, chills, fever, severe shivering (flu like symptoms) to shortness of breath and wheezing.

- ***These symptoms are the same as MANY other conditions circulating***
- ***it is therefore currently highly unlikely anyone with these existing symptoms will have this coronavirus in Hertfordshire as things stand.***

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What if we have someone with symptoms in school or setting?

If someone not in any of the exposure categories listed in the table above develops symptoms it is unlikely they have coronavirus. If someone who is in one of the exposure categories above develops symptoms it is prudent to put them in a room or place away from others while you ring NHS111 for advice. It is also prudent to clean any surfaces they have coughed or sneezed over and for everyone to practice good hygiene. If the person needs supervision it is advisable to stay two metres from them and practice good hygiene. This will minimise any risk. Follow any advice from NHS111.

What should we be doing locally in school or our setting?

The key thing is to follow the advice about travel above and also hygiene guidance below.

What hygiene measures should we take?

Should cases occur in the UK, Hygiene measures are the most effective way of limiting spread of all these viruses, especially since we are in flu season. There is as yet no vaccine. Getting into the routine of practising good hygiene for colds and 'flu is the best way to disrupt spread of the virus if it does start circulating in the UK.

- Reinforce and practice universal hygiene measures that we **all** should do (but often don't) for **all** respiratory infections like colds etc. It is highly probable that the method of spread is the same as colds, flu and other coronaviruses: droplets.
- Hygiene measures are:
 1. **Catch it, Bin it, Kill it** : Sneeze into disposable tissues "Catch it", dispose of them "Bin it" and then wash hands with warm soap and water or use hand sanitiser gel if it is not possible to wash ("kill it".) You can find a poster to use here <https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/09/catch-bin-kill.pdf>
 2. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or hand gel as a second best if it is not available

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3. Avoid touching your face unless you've just washed your hands
4. Ensure surfaces which get droplets on them from coughs and sneezes are cleaned with ordinary detergents regularly if people are showing symptoms of colds and flu (eg handles, worktops) (see cleaning advice below.)

At this stage there is **no need** for any further local measures. We should all be doing this **all the time** especially during cold and 'flu season to disrupt spread of those.

Government posters and video link for the public can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-public-information-campaign-launched-across-the-uk>

The Chinese authorities are putting in place significant measures to contain the outbreak because of local circumstances. There is no need for any of these here.

When should we close our school or setting?

It is highly unlikely at the current stage of spread to be advisable to close your school or setting unless you have a confirmed case of someone with coronavirus in the school or setting.

But in all circumstances, if you have someone with suspected or confirmed coronavirus, it is important that you take advice on what to do from the Public Health England local health protection team **on 0300 303 8537 option 1**

Organised school trips

Schools should follow the advice on travel for staff and students take universal precautions for **ALL** respiratory infections will significantly hinder spread of 'flu; **AND** coronavirus if it comes (see above on what we should be doing locally and below on cleaning.)

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Until further notice, it would be prudent to consider that government will advise against school trips to China, Macao, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Thailand , Taiwan and Japan.

Cleaning Advice

Because the virus is not yet circulating in the UK there is **no need** for any special cleaning. In the event of confirmed or suspect cases specific advice may be given purely as a precaution and it is advisable in the event of such a case to take specific advice from the Public Health England Local Health Protection Team on **0300 303 8537 option 1**

In any case, regular cleaning to disrupt spread of colds and flu will be sufficient for workplaces, homes and most non NHS care settings. The best way to prepare for the possibility of any virus circulating in the UK is to get into the rhythm of doing this

- Regular cleaning with ordinary detergent of surfaces touched frequently and thus likely to have droplets of cold or flu virus on them like worktops, tables, door handles, light switches, lift button panels.
- There is **NO** need at present to use special detergents.
- Because coronavirus is a virus not a bacteria, antibacterial cleaning agents are **not** required.
- **In the event that you have a case or suspected case, Contact the Public Health England Local Health Protection Team on 0300 303 8537 option 1 to determine whether any new advice on cleaning has been formulated**

*Should cases arrive and escalate in the UK, it is likely that cleaning advice will change to a) clean these surfaces far more frequently, b) cover a small number of very high frequency touch surfaces such as lift panel buttons with plastic to enable thorough cleaning and c) there may be a need to change the type of detergent. Be aware that this **MAY** happen but as yet there is no need for it.*

Further Information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>