

Schools Workforce: excerpts from relevant government guidance

Woodcroft School | 20 April 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for schools about temporarily closing

Updated 9 April 2020

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Workforce

Who can work in schools in light of recent social distancing measures?

We have published separate [guidance on implementing social distancing measures in education and childcare settings](#).

Should school staff with an underlying health condition stay at home?

Our [guidance on implementing social distancing measures in education and childcare settings](#) sets out that staff with conditions that mean they are at increased risk of serious illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as those who are pregnant, should work from home where possible, and education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this.

Should staff with serious underlying health conditions, which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), stay at home and take shielding measures?

We are strongly advising people, including education staff, with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), such as solid organ transplant recipients, and people with specific cancers, to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe. Staff in this position must not attend work. More advice on this can be found in the [guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#).

Should staff who live with someone with a serious underlying health condition, who is taking shielding measures, stay at home?

If a member of staff lives with someone in a vulnerable health group, including those who are pregnant, they can attend their

education or childcare setting. The number of social interactions in the education or childcare environment will be reduced, due to there being fewer children attending, and social distancing and good hand hygiene being practised.

If a member of staff lives in a household with someone who is in the most vulnerable health groups, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), they should only attend work if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. Settings should allow staff who live with someone in the most vulnerable health groups to work from home where possible.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing social distancing in education and childcare settings

Updated 7 April 2020

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Individuals in vulnerable health groups

We are strongly advising people, including education staff, with serious underlying health conditions which put them at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19), to rigorously follow shielding measures in order to keep themselves safe.

Staff in this position must not attend work. More advice on this can be found in the [guidance on shielding](#).

Staff with other conditions that mean they are at increased risk of serious illness as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19) should work from home where possible, and education and childcare settings should endeavour to support this. More advice on this is included in the [social distancing guidance](#).

If a child in one of the categories above, or a member of staff, lives with someone in a vulnerable health group, including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting, as the number of social interactions in the education or childcare environment will be reduced, due to there being fewer

children attending, and social distancing and good hand hygiene being practised.

If a child in one of the categories outlined above lives in a household with someone who is in the most vulnerable health groups, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), they should only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions. This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing.

Settings should allow staff who live with someone in the most vulnerable health groups to work from home where possible.

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Guidance

Guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19

Updated 17 April 2020

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Who is 'clinically extremely vulnerable'?

Expert doctors in England have identified specific medical conditions that, based on what we know about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people may include the following people. Disease severity, history or treatment levels will also affect who is in the group.

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:

- people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
 - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
 - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary (COPD).
 4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as Severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell).
 5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
 6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

People who fall in this group should have been contacted to tell them they are clinically extremely vulnerable.

If you're still concerned, you should discuss your concerns with your GP or hospital clinician.

Check this is the right guidance for you

There's different guidance if you are not clinically extremely vulnerable.

Follow the [different guidance](#) if any of the following apply to you:

- you do not have any of the conditions that makes you clinically extremely vulnerable
- you have not been told by your GP or specialist that you're clinically extremely vulnerable or received a letter

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Staying at home and shielding

You're strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact if you're clinically extremely vulnerable to protect yourself.

This is called 'shielding'.

Shielding means:

1. Do not leave your house.
2. Do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces, for example, family homes, weddings and religious services.
3. Strictly avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.

The Government is currently advising people to shield until the end of June and is regularly monitoring this position.

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Living with other people

The rest of your household do not need to start shielding themselves, but they should do what they can to support you in shielding and to carefully follow [guidance on social distancing](#).

At home you should:

1. Minimise the time other people living with you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.
2. Keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If you can, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.
3. If you share a toilet and bathroom with others, it's important that they are cleaned every time after use (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with you using the facilities first.
4. If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while they're present. If you can, take your meals back to your room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing-up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If you are using your own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.
5. Everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If the rest of your household are able to follow this guidance, there is no need for them to take the full protective measures to keep you safe.

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Guidance

Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK

Updated 30 March 2020

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Background and scope of guidance

This guidance is for everyone, including children. It advises on social distancing measures we should all be taking to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). It is intended for use in situations where people are living in their own homes, with or without additional support from friends, family and carers. If you live in a residential care setting [guidance is available](#).

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
 - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
 - chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
 - [chronic kidney disease](#)
 - chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)

- chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- [diabetes](#)
- problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell](#) disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

Note: there are some clinical conditions which put people at even higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. If you are in this category, next week the NHS in England will directly contact you with advice about the more stringent measures you should take in order to keep yourself and others safe.

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