

Coronavirus Risk assessment and information

16/03/2020

Coronaviruses are a common type of virus. They typically cause fever and a cough, which may progress to more severe pneumonia, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties in some people, according to Public Health England (PHE).

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, Hubei province, China. The current evidence is that most cases appear to be mild and most of those who have died in Wuhan appear to have had pre-existing health conditions.

Because little is known about this new strain of the virus, it is not clear how it is spread, however, similar viruses tend to be spread by coughs and sneezes – so the way the infection gains entry to the body is the same as the way it exits and spreads to others.

It is also possible that the virus may be spread by touching a surface or object that has been coughed or sneezed on by someone with the virus – such as by touching a doorknob or shaking hands with someone and then touching your face.

There is currently no specific cure for the new coronavirus so treatment is aimed at relieving the symptoms.

It is important to remember that the risk of getting the illness is still unlikely.

The chief medical officers for the UK have been preparing the UK and have already put in place robust infection control measures to respond immediately. The NHS is well-prepared and used to managing infections and are already working to quickly identify any contacts of the patients confirmed to have the virus, to prevent further spread.

Is the novel coronavirus a notifiable disease?

Covid-19 has now been added to the government's list of notifiable diseases [here](#). However, it is important to remember that it is not early years providers' responsibility to report instances of these diseases to Public Health England but they do need to report instances to Ofsted if a diagnosis is confirmed by a health professional in their setting.

What are the symptoms?

The NHS advises that symptoms of the coronavirus usually include:

- feeling tired
- difficulty breathing

- a high temperature
- a cough

What should I do if someone at my setting needs to self-isolate?

As of 13 March 2020, **anyone** who has symptoms of coronavirus – see above – should self-isolate at home for seven days from when their symptoms started. This includes both children attending your setting and people in your staff team.

This step is designed to help protect vulnerable people, such as those with underlying health conditions and the elderly, from catching the virus.

People who are in self-isolation do not need to contact NHS 111, unless their symptoms worsen or have not improved after the seven days of isolation.

People who have recently returned from overseas travel may also need to self-isolate:

If a member of staff or child has recently returned from one of the following areas they should [follow government advice](#) and self-isolate (remain at home) for 14 days and contact NHS 111 – even if they do not have any symptoms:

- Wuhan city and Hubei Province, China
- Iran
- Daegu, Gyeongsan or Cheongdo in South Korea
- [specific areas](#) in northern Italy
- anywhere in Italy on or after 9 March

Children should not be dropped off at your setting by anyone who has recently returned from one of these areas – they should make arrangements for another family member or friend to drop them off instead.

Those who have recently returned from one of the areas below do not necessarily need to take any special measures, but if they develop even mild symptoms they should self-isolate and contact NHS 111:

- Italy (outside of the [specified areas](#)) before 9 March
- Cambodia
- China – except the areas listed in above
- Hong Kong
- Japan
- Laos
- Macau
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Republic of Korea – except the areas listed above
- Singapore
- Taiwan

- Thailand
- Vietnam

All other children and staff can attend your setting as usual – unless they have been advised otherwise by Public Health officials.

If you know that a child or member of staff has recently returned from one of these areas yet is not following government advice, you should request that they not attend the provision until the required self-isolation period is over.

Self-isolating staff members

If a staff member has any of the symptoms they need to self isolate for seven days if the symptoms you have are new. Staff are to inform the Preschool Manager and deputy if they are self isolating.

The government has confirmed that statutory sick pay will temporarily be made available to all staff self-isolating as a result of the virus from the first day of their isolation. For more information visit the government website [here](#).

Keeping records

You should keep a confidential record of any staff members and children who are in self-isolation.

You do not need to include any personal details, just the date of isolation and the date they are due to return to work. This will help health authorities manage any subsequent outbreaks in your local area.

Once the isolation period is over and the staff member or child affected has no symptoms, they should speak with their GP about getting clearance to return to your setting.

Confirmed cases

If a child or staff member at your setting is diagnosed with coronavirus, you should contact Public Health England who will advise you on the next steps to take. They will need to discuss the case and establish if the patient has had any contact with any other individuals at your setting.

The Health Protection Team will assess the setting and advise the patient on isolation.

As with any widespread infection that could pose a threat to their children, parents may be understandably concerned.

Social media and word-of-mouth in a community can sometimes be a source of misinformation, particularly if you hear of a suspected case of coronavirus locally.

You can reassure parents who are worried by sharing up-to-date information and advice from reliable sources.

Staff should be aware not to share any information with parents regarding children or staff as this is part of their Confidentiality policy and staff handbook. It is important to note that any content shared on social networking sites could potentially end up in the public domain, even if it appears to be 'private' or is on a closed profile or group.

Your staff should always be aware of wider implications of sharing such information in their personal networks.

Rigorous infection control measures

Parents can also be confident that your setting already has rigorous infection control measures in place, including:

- good basic hygiene practices, including regular hand-washing (practitioners and children)
- staff cover any existing wounds or lesions with waterproof dressings
- personal protective equipment (PPE) such as aprons and gloves are used as needed
- there are procedures in place for cleaning equipment and the environment
- spillages of blood and other bodily fluids are cleaned immediately
- there are procedures for the safe disposal of waste
- awareness of infection control guidance, including the management of infections

Public Health England advises that children and staff should be encouraged to **catch sneezes with a tissue, bin the tissue and wash their hands**.

You should also remind children to wash their hands:

- after outside breaks
- before meals and snack times
- after using the toilet
- when they arrive at your setting
- at the end of the day before they go home.

You should try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and should not share any items that come into contact with mouths such as cups, bottles and straws.

People who are feeling unwell – including both children and staff – should not attend your setting.

There are general principles anyone can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- washing your hands often - with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser if handwashing facilities are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. See [Catch it, Bin it, Kill it](#)

- people who feel unwell should stay at home and should not attend work or any education or childcare setting
- pupils, students, staff and visitors should wash their hands:
 - before leaving home
 - on arrival at school
 - after using the toilet
 - after breaks and sporting activities
 - before food preparation
 - before eating any food, including snacks
 - before leaving school
- use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call NHS 111. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment
- see further information on the [Public Health England Blog](#) and the [NHS UK website](#).

PHE has a [suite of materials](#) that contains public health advice about how you can help stop the spread of viruses, like those that cause COVID-19, by practicing good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Face masks for the general public, pupils or students, or staff are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

People who have returned from [Category 1 specified countries/areas](#) in the last 14 days should self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending an educational setting or work until 14 days after they return.

People who have returned from [Category 2 specified countries/areas](#) in the last 14 days, are advised to stay at home if they develop symptoms. All other pupils or students and staff should continue to attend school or university, including their siblings attending the same or a different school (unless advised not to by public health officials).

This is the information that has been sent to the parents,

As you are aware of the health situation at the moment, we are asking that you read this information and follow the guidance so we can actively work together.

Illness,

Exclusion times

Chicken pox, children should be kept away until all spots are crusted over

Cold sores, Dependent on severity then the child should be kept off until it is no longer weeping or oozing

Conjunctivitis, Kept off until eyes are no longer weeping or oozing

Coughs and colds, It is fine for the child to attend Preschool with a minor cough or cold but if they have a fever they should be kept off until it goes down or they no longer require calpol

Ear infection, If this is an infection or severe ear ache the child should be off until they no longer require calpol

Fever, If your child has a fever and requires calpol or ibuprofen to keep this down they should not be in Preschool until they no longer require this.

Hand foot and mouth, Please keep the child off until the spots are crusted over

Headlice, Please treat at home and once treated they can come back to Preschool

Impetigo, Antibiotic treatment is required and need to be off until this is crusted over and healed

Rash, unexplained rashes should be seen by a doctor before returning to Preschool

Sore throat, Please keep child off if they are poorly and running a fever and can return when they no longer require calpol

If your child becomes unwell or their behaviour makes you feel they are unwell we are asking for you to keep them off until they are better. If your child has a fever and you have to administer calpol then please keep them off until they no longer require this. If your child is given calpol or ibuprofen overnight or in the morning then we ask for them to be kept off as this can mask pain and fever.

We are following all guidelines set by the Government and checking these daily as they are changing.

We have also put in place that the children will come in one by one from the outside of the building and also collected this way. We have cancelled our concerts, visits from outside agencies and child settle sessions. We have risk assessed our activities within Preschool and will be managed accordingly. These have been put in place to try and ensure we are looking at the best interests of the staff and children. We are following our policies and procedures as well as information from the Government. We will keep you informed through facebook, email and letter for all updates.