

Staff Q&As – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NHS information & advice about COVID-19: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Q1. What are the rules on self-isolation?

You must self-isolate immediately and inform your line manager if:

- a. you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- b. you have tested positive for COVID-19
- c. you live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive
- d. someone in your support bubble (i.e. where someone who lives alone, or just with their children, can meet people from one other household) has symptoms or has tested positive and you have been in close contact with them
- e. you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- f. you have arrived in the UK from a country with a high COVID-19 risk
- g. you are waiting for a COVID-19 test or test results

How long you must self-isolate for will depend on whether you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>.

If you are isolating as a result of quarantine measures following travel abroad you must follow the quarantine rules and self-isolate accordingly - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive-in-england>

Q2. Do I receive pay while I am self-isolating?

The following employees should receive contractual sick pay (provided they meet the other qualifying conditions):

- a. anyone who is self-isolating because they have tested positive for COVID-19
- b. anyone waiting for test results because they are suspected of having COVID-19
- c. anyone with COVID-19 symptoms
- d. anyone who is living with someone with COVID-19 symptoms
- e. anyone who is in the same support bubble as someone with symptoms or who has tested positive
- f. anyone who has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace
- g. anyone who is advised to stay at home before being admitted to hospital for the purpose of undergoing a surgical or other hospital procedure.
- h. Contractual sick pay is payable from the first day of absence.

If you are shielding because you are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus you must contact your line manager and HR.

Please note: anyone who is self-isolating because they have returned to the UK from abroad and has to quarantine is not entitled to contractual sick pay

If you are able to work from home while you are self-isolating and are not unwell, or you can make up your missed hours (in agreement with your manager), you will receive your normal pay.

If you are unable to work from home, either because your job does not allow this or because you are unwell, or cannot make up the hours missed, you will receive contractual sick pay. You must follow the sickness absence procedure in the Sickness Absence Policy

Q3. How do I get tested?

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms can get a test via the government online test site www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test There are two options: (1) to take the test at a local test site, or (2) to take a home test kit.

All staff and students are expected to carry out a lateral flow test at home or in their boarding houses twice a week. Staff and day students should order a home testing kit from the government website. Boarders are provided with a home testing kit by the College. It is important that everybody plays a part in testing in order to keep our community safe.

More information about different tests is available here <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/>

Q4. How long should I self-isolate if I develop symptoms?

Anyone who develops symptoms must stay at home and arrange to be tested. If you test positive, you must remain at home for **at least 10 days** – longer if your symptoms persist.

If the test is negative, you can return to work provided:

- a. everyone you live with or who is in your support bubble who has symptoms tests negative
- b. you are not told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace; and
- c. you feel well and have not been sick, had diarrhoea or a fever for 48 hours

Q5. Do I have to tell my line manager if I have had a positive result?

Yes. You should explain why you are not in work on the first day and keep your line manager updated if you are likely to be absent for more than 10 days. You may be unable to visit your GP to obtain a fit note, but you can provide a copy of your results.

Q6. Do I have to self-isolate if I have been in 'close contact' with someone suspected of having COVID-19?

No. Close contacts do not have to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves or they are asked to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace service. However, they should:

- a. avoid contact with people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as people with pre-existing medical conditions
- b. take extra care in practising social distancing and good hygiene
- c. self-isolate if they also show signs of coronavirus

In a work context, a 'close contact' is a person who has had close face to face contact (within one metre) for any length of time with the person who is suspected of having COVID-19, including talking to them or being coughed on. It also includes people who have been within two metres for more than 15 minutes or have travelled with them in a car or aircraft.

Q7. What happens if my child is told to self-isolate?

If your child is told to self-isolate because they have symptoms, they must get a test as soon as possible and they, you (and any other children or adults in the same house) will need to stay at home and self-isolate. How long you need to self-isolate for will depend on the test result and whether you and anyone else in the household start displaying symptoms - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>.

If your child is told to self-isolate because someone else in their bubble has symptoms, neither you nor any other member of the household has to self-isolate (unless your child then develops symptoms).

In such circumstances you can take unpaid leave to deal with an emergency, such as collecting children from school at short notice. However, you are only entitled to a reasonable amount of time off – usually a day or two to make arrangements for their care. If you cannot return to work because you do not have anyone else you can ask to look after your child, you should discuss the situation your line manager. Options could be: work from home, up to 3 days' special leave (in a rolling year in line with the College's special leave policy), annual leave (paid), special leave/parental leave (unpaid).

Q9. Should we tell other staff members if a colleague tests positive?

Anyone who has a test is encouraged to ask their line manager to alert colleagues with whom they have been in close contact, even before they have results. The [stay at home guidance](#) advises anyone who tests positive to consider alerting people who you do not live with but have had close contact with within the last 48 hours to let them know you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Line managers should liaise with HR to contact the NHS Test and Trace service to confirm which members of staff need to self-isolate.