



Managing Coronavirus in the Workplace Policy

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Policy Review Date:	31/03/2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 23 February 2022 the Government published its COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19 guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19>.
- 1.2 This Government guidance outlines the removal of all legal COVID-19 restrictions and the planned cessation of free public testing (both Lateral Flow [LFT] and Polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR]).
- 1.3 This Policy details the measures and process that will be followed by CIT schools and staff.

2. Infection Control Measures

- 2.1 The Government has set out the following ongoing recommended precautions to be followed by all individuals:
 - a) Getting vaccinated
 - b) Ventilation – opening windows when meeting/working indoors
 - c) Wearing face coverings in crowded enclosed spaces
 - d) Try to stay at home if you feel unwell and have COVID-19 symptoms
 - e) Taking a test, if available, if you have any of the recognised symptoms
 - f) Staying at home and limiting contact if you test positive
 - g) Washing hands regularly and following the “catch it, bin it, kill it” advice

3. Symptoms

- 3.1 The NHS report the following as the main symptoms of COVID-19:
 - a) A high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
 - b) A new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
 - c) A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

4. Testing

- 4.1 During the pandemic the Government has provided free testing, both LFT and PCR, but this has come at a significant expense. As a result, this provision will be removed from 1 April 2022.
- 4.2 Staff and pupils in mainstream schools are no longer required to self-test before attending work.
- 4.3 Staff and pupils in Special Education settings are still required to self-test twice a week in line with Government guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/rapid-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings>. These tests are currently provided to staff by the school for free. Any changes to this arrangement will be communicated via Headteachers as appropriate.
- 4.4 Centrally employed staff who routinely visit our special schools are required to self-

test twice a week in line with the guidance for those schools. CIT will provide tests for these staff.

- 4.5 Centrally employed staff who visit schools on an ad-hoc basis will be required to self-test before each visit to a Special Education setting. Tests will be provided by CIT or the individual can liaise with the school to be provided with a self-test on arrival.

5. Attending Work

- 5.1 During the pandemic, absence due to COVID-19 had been managed outside the scope of our normal absence management process.
- 5.2 Due to the legal requirement to isolate coming to an end and free testing no longer being available (from 1 April 2022), we intend to manage COVID-19 related absence in line with our Absence Management Policy from 1 April 2022. This process is explained below.

Staff with Symptoms

- 5.3 Staff with symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to stay at home or work from home where possible (and fit enough to do so).
- 5.4 If no COVID-19 test is taken, staff are able to attend work if they feel fit and able to do so and do not/no longer have a temperature. This absence will be managed in line with other types of sickness absence and count towards triggers.
- 5.5 If evidence of a positive test is provided, CIT will recognise this and discount the initial 5-day period of absence from any triggers.
- 5.6 Staff who have tested positive should remain absent from work for 5 working days. Staff can return after this period if they feel fit and able to do so and no longer have a temperature.
- 5.7 If staff who test positive remain absent after 5 working days, this extended period will count towards normal absence triggers unless evidence of a new positive COVID-19 test is provided. This test must be taken on the 6th day of absence. In these cases, an additional maximum 5 working day period of absence will be discounted from any triggers.
- 5.8 Staff will be able to return to work during this additional 5-day period if they return a negative test.
- 5.9 Any absence over 10 working days due to COVID-19, or suspected COVID-19, will be considered as Post Covid Fatigue Syndrome (or Long Covid) and managed in line with our normal absence process. The first date of absence used for management purposes will be:
- a) The first date of absence, if no positive test result is provided
 - b) The 6th working day if one positive test result is provided
 - c) The 11th working day if a second positive test result is provided on day 6
- 5.10 Any absence that continues for over 20 working days will be managed as a long-term absence.

Close Contacts

5.11 There is no longer a requirement to isolate due to being a close contact or living with somebody who has tested positive.

5.12 If staff are absent due to caring for dependants, the provisions within the Annual Leave and Leave of Absence Policy will apply.

6. Pregnant Staff

6.1 Pregnant staff will be expected to attend work as normal.

6.2 There is no requirement from 1 April 2022 to have a specific COVID-19 risk assessment for pregnant staff but our Maternity Risk Assessment has been expanded to incorporate infectious diseases.

7. Staff who are Medically Vulnerable

7.1 This definition can include staff who were previously defined as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) or clinically vulnerable (CV) – or otherwise at higher risk from COVID-19, or who live with or care for such people.

7.2 The Government guidance for these staff to shield to protect themselves from the virus has now ended, however, these staff should continue to follow the Government guidance, where possible, to protect themselves
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk/covid-19-guidance-for-people-whose-immune-system-means-they-are-at-higher-risk>.

7.3 Any staff who feel vulnerable or at risk should speak to their Headteacher (line manager for Central staff) to discuss an individual risk assessment.

8. Staff Wellbeing

8.1 CIT is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Preventing stress during these difficult times is a major factor in maintaining the wellbeing of all staff, which remains a key priority.

8.2 To assist you in maintaining your own wellbeing and that of your colleagues during the current climate:

- a) Be aware of the early signs of stress or mental health issues in yourself and your colleagues
- b) Support co-workers if they become stressed, which may include practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- c) Promote a positive, supportive atmosphere throughout the setting
- d) Be open to discussing stress
- e) Report honestly about your wellbeing and any incidents of stress that COVID-19 may cause you
- f) Where possible, ask for help when you feel stressed

8.3 CIT is very much aware of the stress and anxiety that may be caused during the current climate and we are committed to focusing on supporting all employees at this difficult time.

8.4 If you are experiencing anxiety/stress-related issues, please contact your line manager who will be happy to support and signpost you to the appropriate

person/resources.

8.5 The Trust also provides a 24-hour confidential helpline through Health Assured:

Employee Assistance Programme – 0800 032 7097 or visit
www.healthassuredeap.com

User name: Croner

Password: EAP

The link also has valuable resources which may support you further.

8.6 Useful links for wellbeing:

- a) 5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- b) STOP Technique PDF (www.thewellnesssociety.org)

9. Working from Home

9.1 Employees who are required to work remotely from home should please make sure that you:

- a) Have the correct equipment to fulfil your job role/task;
- b) Are contactable during your normal working hours;
- c) Keep in regular contact with your line manager (at least once per week);
- d) Build in short/regular breaks during the day.