

Novel Coronavirus - COVID-19 Guidance for Schools and Colleges

This guidance will assist schools and other educational settings in providing advice for pupils, students, staff and parents or carers regarding:

- the novel coronavirus, COVID-19,
- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19,
- what to do if someone confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 has been in a school or other educational setting, and
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan or Thailand within the last 14 days.

Detailed information and guidance about the virus can be found at www.gov.gg/coronavirus.

This document provides detailed information about how schools should manage a suspected or confirmed case. Please ensure all staff have familiarized themselves with this guidance.

With regards to travel information to China or other countries for pupils or students resident in the Bailiwick, we recommend following the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) [country advice pages](#). At present, FCO advises against all travel to Hubei Province due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The FCO also advises against all but essential travel to the rest of mainland China (not including Hong Kong and Macau).

PLEASE NOTE that currently the Public Health Authorities in the Bailiwick are requesting anyone who has returned from Mainland China, in the last 14 days to self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending an education setting or work until 14 days after they have left Mainland China. See below for further information.

Detailed information on management of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

1. What to do if children, pupils, students or staff become unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 (either through travel to Mainland China and other affected countries or contact with a confirmed case)

Call 999 in an emergency (if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk) and explain which country they have returned from in the last 14 days. You can do this on their behalf if this is easier. People who become unwell should be advised **not to go to their GP, pharmacy, or hospital.**

Make sure that children and young people know to tell a member of staff if they feel unwell.

In a non-emergency situation, you should call Public Health Services on 01481 725241 for advice and guidance. Public Health Services will advise on where the unwell person should go (and when) for further investigations.

Whilst you wait for advice, try to find somewhere safe for the unwell person to sit which is at least 2 metres away from other people. If possible, find a room or area where they can be isolated behind a shut door, such as a staff office or meeting room. If it is possible to open a window, do so for ventilation. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin. If no bin is available, put the tissue in a bag or pocket for disposing in a bin later. If you don't have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow. The room will need to be cleaned (as outlined later in this document) once they leave. Further advice regarding cleaning of other areas the person has occupied throughout the day will be provided by the Public Health Services on a case by case basis.

If they need to go to the bathroom whilst waiting for medical assistance, they should use a separate bathroom if available, which will also need to be cleaned before being used by others.

2. What to do if a case of COVID-19 (pupil, student or staff) is suspected in your childcare or education setting

If anyone has been in contact with a suspected case in a childcare or educational setting, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited. There is no need to close the setting or send other learners or staff home.

As a precautionary measure, Guernsey are currently testing **symptomatic (showing symptoms)** people who have travelled back from affected countries (currently defined as Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan or Thailand) within the last 14 days and have symptoms of cough, fever or shortness of

breath, however mild. To date (18 February 2020) all have tested negative. Therefore, until the outcome of test results is known there is no action that staff members need to take.

Once the results arrive, those who test negative for COVID-19 will be advised individually about return to education.

3. What to do if a case of COVID-19 (pupil, student or staff) is confirmed in your childcare or education setting

The childcare or educational setting will be contacted by Public Health Services to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on the actions or precautions that should be taken. An assessment of each childcare or education setting will be undertaken with relevant staff. Advice on the management of pupils or students and staff will be based on this assessment.

Public Health Services will also be in contact with the patient directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the patient to provide them with appropriate advice. Advice on cleaning of communal areas such as classrooms, changing rooms and toilets will be given by Public Health Services and is outlined later in this document.

If there is a confirmed case, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the educational establishment with advice from Public Health Services. In most cases, closure of the childcare or education setting will be unnecessary, but this will be a local decision based on various factors such as establishment size and pupil mixing.

4. What to do if pupils, students or staff in your institution are contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 who was symptomatic while attending your childcare or educational setting

Public Health Services will take the lead on any contact tracing and will work closely with your school or college to identify contacts around a confirmed case.

Contacts are not considered cases and if they are well, they are very unlikely to have spread the infection to others, however:

- they will be asked to self-isolate at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the self-isolation advice on www.gov.gg/coronavirus
- they will be contacted daily by Public Health Services
- if they develop any symptoms (**however mild**) within their 14-day observation period they should call Public Health Services for advice and guidance
- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be tested for COVID-19
- if they require emergency medical attention, call 999 and tell the call that the person has a history of potential contact with COVID-19

- if they are unwell at any time within their 14-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated for the infection

Family and friends who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities such as attending childcare or educational settings or work, unless they become unwell. If they become unwell, they should call Public Health Services and explain their symptoms and discuss any known contact with the case to consider if they need further assessment.

If a confirmed case occurs in an educational setting Public Health Services will provide you with advice and will work with the Head teacher, principal and/or management team of that setting. **Outside those that are defined as close contacts, the rest of the school does not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities attending educational establishments or work as usual, unless they become unwell.**

If they become unwell, they will be assessed as a suspected case depending on their symptoms. This advice applies to teaching staff and children in the rest of the class who are not in a close friendship group or children undertaking small group work. The decision as to whether pupils, students and staff fall into this contact group or the closer contact group will be made between Public Health Services, the educational setting and (if they are old enough) the student. Advice should be given as follows:

- if they become unwell with cough, fever or shortness of breath they will be asked to self-isolate and should seek medical advice from Public Health Services – 01481 725241
- if they are unwell at any time within the 14 days of contact and they are tested and are positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case and will be treated as such.

5. What to do if pupils, students or staff in your childcare or educational setting have travelled from anywhere in Mainland China in the past 14 days

If an individual falls into this category, contact Public Health Services for further advice:

- if they are currently well, they should self-isolate for 14 days after leaving Mainland China and you should follow the advice as above for contacts of confirmed cases in the educational setting
- if they become unwell please call Public Health Services immediately on 01481 725241 for them to be assessed by an appropriate specialist. You should follow the advice as above for contacts of confirmed cases in the educational establishment. If they require emergency medical attention, call 999 and tell the call handler that the person has a history of recent travel to risk areas for COVID-19

6. What to do if a pupil, student or staff member has travelled from elsewhere in Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan or Thailand in the last 14 days

If they are currently well:

- they are advised to self-isolate only if they develop symptoms
- if they are well, they can continue to attend work or education
- they do not need to avoid contact with other people
- their family do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities
- testing people with no symptoms for COVID-19 is currently not recommended

it is useful to always take a mobile phone with them when they go out so that they can contact others if they do become unwell

If they become unwell:

- they should stay indoors and avoid contact with other people as they would with other flu viruses (see this self-isolation guidance on www.gov.gg/coronavirus)
- they (or a family member, colleague or member of staff) should call Public Health Services immediately for them to be assessed by an appropriate specialist, as quickly as possible
- they should stay at home and should not attend work or education
- they should not go directly to their GP or other healthcare environment
- if they require emergency medical attention, call 999 and tell the call handler that the person has a history of recent travel to risk areas for COVID-19

7. What to do if pupils, students or staff return from travel anywhere else in the world within the last 14 days

Currently there are minimal cases outside the risk areas and therefore the likelihood of an individual coming into contact with a confirmed case is low.

There is no need to advise any of these pupils, student or staff to avoid normal activities or educational settings unless they have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

If individuals are aware that they have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should contact Public Health Services for further advice.

For the latest country specific information please visit [NaTHNac Travel Pro](https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries) ¹

We know that the Southeast Asian region poses a risk for travellers but at this stage we are unable to be more precise about which countries pose the greatest and lowest risks. This is because countries differ in ability to test for, and therefore, detect cases of the virus. As a

¹ <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

result, the Director of Public Health considers it prudent for anyone who has returned from travel in any area of Southeast Asia to be on guard for symptoms – even very mild symptoms; fever, cough or shortness of breath – and contact Public Health Services for advice if these develop in the 14 days after returning from this area

8. What to do with post, packages or food sent from Mainland China and other areas/countries specified as above within the last 14 days

There is no need to change how you handle post, packages or food received from the affected regions. The virus does not survive well for long periods outside the body and so it is highly unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through post or packages. It is highly unlikely that COVID-19 can be spread through food.

9. How should we clean educational establishments where there were children, students or staff suspected cases of COVID-19?

- Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. All surfaces that the suspected case has come into contact with must be cleaned with a neutral detergent, followed by a disinfectant effective against the coronavirus such as a chlorine-based disinfectant, in the form of a solution at a minimum strength of 1,000ppm available chlorine. Oxivir Plus is also known to be effective and therefore can be used in such instances. If an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, please contact Public Health for further advice. This type of cleaning is only required in the event of a suspected or confirmed case.

Areas to be cleaned include:

- all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones etc.

Public Health Services will be in touch to guide you through this process.

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected. If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned as detailed above.

10. If children, students or staff become unwell with suspected COVID-19 in the educational establishment, what should we do with their rubbish, including tissues?

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then

be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It should be put in a safe place and quarantined. Public Health will then arrange for pick up and disposal as clinical waste.

11. Information about the virus

A coronavirus is a type of virus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. COVID-19 is the disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus (known as SARS-CoV-2) first identified in Wuhan City, China in January 2020.

The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed coronavirus, they have not been infected.

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- cough
- difficulty in breathing
- fever

Generally, these infections are mild but can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease. There is no evidence that children are more affected than other age groups – very few cases have been reported in children.

12. How COVID-19 is spread

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes (termed respiratory secretions) containing the virus are most likely to be the most important means of transmission.

There are 2 routes by which people could become infected:

- secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or could be inhaled into the lungs
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching a doorknob or shaking hands then touching own face).

There is currently no good evidence that people who do not have symptoms are infectious to others.

13. Preventing spread of infection

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

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 using public transport
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in a bin. **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

Schools may need to consider working new routines into their school day i.e. to specifically instruct children to go and wash their hands at various points in the day. This is particularly relevant for young children.

- use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available e.g. on field trips or visits outside of the school or college campus.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- continue to clean all areas with your current general purpose detergent, unless advised otherwise by Public Health Services.
- if you are worried about your symptoms or those of a child or colleague, please call your GP or Public Health Services on 01481 725241. Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.
- see further information www.gov.gg/coronavirus

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 Mainland China, in the last 14 days should self-isolate. This includes avoiding attending an education setting or work until 14 days after they have left Mainland China.

People who have returned from Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan or Thailand in the last 14 days, are advised to stay at home **if** they develop symptoms (however minor) and call Public Health Services for advice on 01481 725241.

We know that the Southeast Asian region poses a risk for travellers but at this stage we are unable to be more precise about which countries pose the greatest and lowest risks. This is because countries differ in ability to test for, and therefore, detect cases of the virus. As a result, the Director of Public Health considers it prudent for anyone who has returned from travel in any area of Southeast Asia to be on guard for symptoms –even very mild symptoms; fever, cough or shortness of breath– and contact Public Health Services for advice if these develop in the 14 days after returning from travel.

All other pupils or students and staff should continue to attend school or college including their siblings attending the same or a different school (unless advised not to by Public Health Services).

**Public Health Services
01481 725241**

21st February 2020