



Department for Education

13 March 2020 - Update on the government's response to COVID-19 (coronavirus).



Government announces move from Contain to Delay phase

Yesterday, the Government announced that we are moving from the Contain phase of the coronavirus action plan and into the Delay phase, in response to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Full details of each stage in the government action plan can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan>

To support the delay of the spread of the virus, the Department for Health and Social Care has asked anyone who shows certain symptoms to stay at home for 7 days, regardless of whether they have travelled to affected areas. This means people should stay at home and avoid all but essential contact with others for 7 days from the point of displaying mild symptoms, to slow the spread of infection.

The symptoms are:

- A high temperature (37.8 degrees and above)
- A new, continuous cough

You do not need to call NHS 111 to stay at home. If your symptoms worsen during your stay at home period or are no better after 7 days contact NHS 111 online at 111.nhs.uk. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

Current advice remains in place: no education or children's social care setting should close in response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case unless advised to do so by Public Health England.

The Chief Medical Officer has advised that the impact of closing schools on both children's education and on the workforce will be substantial, but the benefit to public health may not be. Decisions on future advice to schools will be taken based on the latest and best scientific evidence, which at this stage suggests children are a lower risk group.

COVID-19 travel guidance for the education sector

The Government has issued new travel guidance for the education sector. This advises against all overseas education trips for children under 18. This does not apply to domestic trips, or overseas trips which are already underway.

The full guidance can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19/covid-19-travel-guidance-for-the-education-sector>

Handwashing advice

The most important thing individuals can do to protect themselves is to wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Public Health England recommends that in addition to handwashing before eating, and after coughing and sneezing, everyone should also wash hands after using toilets and travelling on public transport.

Watch this short NHS film for guidance:

- <https://youtu.be/bQCP7waTRWU>

Educational resources

The e-Bug project is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene. Resources are currently available for KS1, KS2 and KS3 and can be used in various settings including schools:

- <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday), 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday)

Please note, we are currently experiencing high volumes of calls and apologise for any wait that you may experience. To ensure that we answer your calls as quickly as possible we have now extended our opening hours to cover weekends.

If you work in a school, please have your unique reference number (URN or UK PRN) available when calling the hotline.

Where to find the latest information

Updates on COVID-19:

- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Guidance for educational settings:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Guidance for social or community care and residential settings:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19>

Travel advice for those travelling and living overseas:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>

Educational resources:

- <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-coronavirus-resources>
- <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools>

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