

Letter to employees setting out position on absence and pay due to Coronavirus

[Insert name]

[Insert address]

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name],

Due to the recent increased focus on Coronavirus, we would like to take the opportunity to set out the Company's position on the various issues that may arise.

We would firstly like to reassure you that the number of cases of the virus in the UK remains very low, as does the risk of exposure. However, we appreciate that the situation has been developing quickly so we have included some information below that we hope will answer some questions that you may have.

Taking measures to reduce virus spread

Please follow the following guidelines from the World Health Organisation on infection control:

- frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- when coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash your hands.
- avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough.

Keeping us updated on travel plans

We know that some of you will have plans to travel in the near future, including pre-booked holidays. Certain countries have been identified as having been severely affected by the virus and we would ask that you consider, for your own health reasons, whether your travel is necessary. If you do travel, please let your manager know of the countries you intend to visit so that we can manage your return appropriately. Additionally, please keep yourself up to date on the countries which require self-isolation upon return. If you would like to cancel any pre-booked annual leave, please speak to your manager.

Self-isolation

The Government is currently advising people to self-isolate if they have recently returned from certain countries even if they have no symptoms, which means staying at home and not having contact with other people. In the event that this applies to you, you must not attend work during the isolation period. You must contact your manager as soon as possible to let them know that you have been required to self-isolate and you must keep them updated on any developments. Where feasible, we may consider whether you can work from home during this period, or whether we can agree a period of paid annual leave [optional – or [insert other arrangements]].

Where no other agreement is made [*Insert details on pay during self-isolation e.g. you will be on authorised absence and this time off work will be unpaid/this time off will be treated in accordance with our normal sickness absence policy and you will receive statutory sick pay subject to normal qualifying criteria/this time off will be treated in accordance with our normal sickness absence policy and you will receive contractual sick pay subject to normal qualifying criteria/you will be on authorised absence and receive full pay during this time off*]. If you return from an area which does not require automatic self-isolation, and you have no symptoms, you should attend work as normal. If you do have symptoms on your return including a cough, fever or difficulty breathing, you should self-isolate, call 111, and also follow our normal sickness reporting procedures. You will be treated as being on sickness absence.

Sending employees home

If we are concerned that you may have been exposed to the virus even though you are not displaying symptoms, we may take the decision to send you home and require you not to attend work. You will receive full pay during this time off.

Contracting the virus

If you develop symptoms at any time, you should call 111 and follow the advice given to you, keeping us updated as to your condition. If it is confirmed that you have contracted coronavirus, your time off work will be treated in the same way as any other sickness absence. You must comply with our normal rules on sickness notification.

School etc closures

If your child's school closes, and you must remain at home whilst you make alternative arrangements for your child's care, this time will be treated in accordance with our normal rules on time off for dependants. This time off will be [*delete as applicable according to normal rules – paid/unpaid*].

[Optional] Employee Assistance Programme

We would like to remind you that, if you have worries or concerns about any aspect of the current situation, you have access to a 24-hour telephone counselling service on [*insert details*].

We do not wish to cause any worry in sending this letter. We are monitoring any developments to the situation and will provide updates where necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about the contents of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

*[Insert name]
[Insert job title]*