

LYPFT COVID-19 Childcare Guiding Principles

Updated 18 September 2020

We recognise every year staff manage child care commitments within usual policy and procedures. However, due to the current pandemic circumstances there has been a request for some additional guidance on how to best support staff with this during school holidays and in instances where a child is sent home from school to self-isolate.

This document is intended to set out the Trust approach to supporting those staff with child care needs, whilst balancing the requirement to provide a number of our services over a 24/7 period and to be as flexible and supportive as we can within those limitations. We also recognise that many staff are working from home and this brings different challenges as well.

What are the rules if your child is sent home from school to self isolate? This is the guidance as at 17 September 2020 (this may be changed and we will share any further updates as they occur)

Department of Education -Guidance for full opening: Schools

Updated 17 September 2020

All schools must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#) or have tested positive in at least the last 10 days and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#), which sets out that they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).

If they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.

Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

What support and options are available to staff?

Where you are experiencing potential difficulties with childcare arrangements the following should be considered and discussed with your manager:

1. Making up of hours

Again with agreement from your manager it may be possible that any unworked hours could be made up through working additional hours at another time when the situation has settled down and this would need to be within a 3 month period and ensure that this doesn't impact on your own health and wellbeing.

2. Use of Annual Leave

In usual circumstances, most staff will use some of their annual leave to support their child care arrangements over the school holidays and therefore, it is expected that staff will request and **book annual leave as usual** during these periods. Where a member of staff has not taken a proportionate amount of leave so far into the leave year (half of the leave entitlement by the end of September) then it may be possible to agree a longer period of leave, however, this is subject to managers' approval. All requests will need to take into account the need for leave to be shared fairly across all staff in the team, and to ensure we have got sufficient cover in our teams/services.

3. Unpaid Leave

If a longer period of time is required to manage child care or Special/Carers Leave has been exhausted, staff can request a period of unpaid leave and this will need to be in agreement with the Manager and any unpaid period could be deducted over an agreed period of time.

4. Flexibility/Flexible Working

Staff should discuss with their manager what temporary adjustments or flexibility can be offered to support child care arrangements – some examples of this may include changing shift patterns, redeployment, time to allow pick up and drop off from child care arrangements, supporting different shift patterns where both carers are employed by the Trust to support care over the week, or extending work over a longer working day. All these need to be agreed by the Manager.

5. Reduction in hours

On a short-term/temporary basis a reduction in hours (with a resultant drop in pay) could be considered to ensure a work/life balance is managed.

6. Special Leave/Carers Leave/Emergency Leave

Where staff have a short-term gap in their child care arrangements, or their arrangements fall down, or your child is sent home from school or other child care provision to self-isolate at very short notice then staff can request a period of Special/ Carers/Emergency Leave in accordance with the current Healthy Working Procedures. Currently the allowance is up to 5 days or equivalent hours of a full shift per calendar year pro rata for part-time workers. As a result of the Covid 19 special circumstances where this initial 5 day allocation has been exhausted and all other options fully considered/utilised we have increased our special leave provision by a further 3 days for all

COVID related instances (temporary arrangement throughout the response to the COVID 19 pandemic until the end of March 2021).

During school holiday periods this option should not be used as an alternative to taking annual leave when supporting child care arrangements, therefore, there is an expectation that at least 2 weeks annual leave is taken before Carers or Special Leave is considered.

7. Working from home

Many staff are currently working from home and managing child care which does support greater flexibility. Where the job role allows managers should support staff working from home.

The rules on leave also apply to staff working from home. Managers should agree with their staff how their work and hours will be organised and managed whilst caring for children. This may include working early in the morning or in the evening.

We know that not all job roles can be done from home and we need staff in work to provide care to service users so this will be a very limited option for most of our inpatient and 24/7 services, however, we encourage managers to consider the option of redeployment to services where this can be accommodated.

Important to have a plan and support

We appreciate staff will have sought to develop the best possible plan and arrangements for looking after their children. However, where this is proving to be a challenge, you should notify your manager as soon as possible. It is essential that we plan together as early as possible, given the need to maintain safe staffing levels.

Managers should then discuss what support can be offered using all the above options and any combination of those. Where any arrangements have a potential impact on service delivery, managers should seek support from their line manager or relevant Head of Operations (and specifically in relation to any new requests to work from home within our inpatient or 24/7 services).

Previous update 15 August 2020

Updated again on 18 September 2020