



Bolton College

**Infection Pandemic
Policy
2024-25**



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1. Introduction

The College recognises the need to safely maintain services during an infection pandemic situation, whilst at the same time properly discharging its duty of care to employees, learners and the general public. This policy is based on the clear principle that in accordance with an employee's contract of employment they are required to attend for duty in order to receive payment.

Only in very exceptional circumstances will the College issue a direct instruction to staff regarding the need to close buildings or reduce service provision due to an infection pandemic or similar. In these circumstances full instructions will be provided as to how this time should be reflected.

In all other circumstances, employees will be expected to present themselves for duty appropriately. This may mean, with management approval, at an alternative work base.

This policy is not designed to cover every eventuality; however, the following is intended to provide guidance within which these circumstances can be dealt with effectively by managers. Depending on the nature of the pandemic at the time and the advice being given to the organisation from health professionals, this will influence College management decisions and this policy may be amended to reflect the situation.

This policy applies to all employees of Bolton College, including senior post holders.

2. Responsibilities of the Employee

- It is the responsibility of the employee to make every effort to attend for duty at their normal place of work.
- In the event of an employee becoming unwell due an infection pandemic the employee will take all reasonable steps to report his/her inability to attend for duty as soon as is practicably possible to their manager.
- Employees shall not unreasonably refuse to comply with temporary redeployment to an alternative base or the undertaking of other duties.
- In the event of an employee not attending for duty because they are suffering from an illness connected to an infection pandemic, then the employee will be recorded as being sick. The normal sick pay arrangements will be in place and the HR team will be advised through the normal channels of an individual's absence and appropriate records will be maintained.
- Where an individual is absent with an illness directly connected to an infection pandemic then the College will reserve the right not to use this absence towards any formal action (i.e., trigger records). The absence however will need to be recorded in the normal way for compliance with sick pay arrangements.
- Where an employee fails to notify or explain his/her absence, the College will class this as 'absent without leave' and the appropriate amount of pay will be deducted.

- If an employee becomes unwell during the course of a normal working day, then they should report this to their manager, go home and seek professional medical advice.

3. Responsibilities of the Manager

In the event of an infection pandemic, College management shall ensure that adequate and appropriate communications and reporting mechanisms exist to enable staff to discharge their responsibilities.

In such circumstances a manager may consider a range of factors impacting upon an employee's ability to attend for duty. This might involve (not in a priority order):-

- Availability of public transport
- Depending upon the nature of the 'infection' it may be necessary to consider the impact on some groups of staff, i.e., pregnant and new mothers and staff who have underlying health issues. Professional medical advice will be sought.
- The capacity for redeployment to an alternative base along with the provision of alternative duties.
- The need to use alternative communication mediums and transport systems.
- The use of existing on call arrangements in order to establish contingency arrangements in the event of an infection pandemic.
- Any other factors pertaining at the time
- Where such circumstances arise and the employee is unable to attend for duty due to them having an illness directly connected to an infection pandemic, then the employee will be recorded as being sick. The normal sick pay arrangements will be in place and the HR team will be advised through the normal channels of an individual's absence.
- Equally, where an emergency situation arises during an employee's span of duty, managers shall exercise their discretion to enable the employee(s) to leave their place of work early to either seek medical advice for themselves or for a dependant etc.
- It may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances for a staff member to be redeployed to an alternative base in order to maintain a safe and appropriate level of service delivery.
- If there is a severe impact on service delivery due to an infection pandemic, either to the organisation as a whole or a particular department, then the Principal will carefully review the situation with key colleagues. If a decision is taken to close the College building(s) or a department/team during the working day and staff, as a result are sent home at some point during the day, then in this situation staff will not face any detriment in relation to their pay/annual leave. If the College however remains closed beyond one/part of a normal working day, then arrangements for staff would need to be reviewed in light of the circumstances presented at the time.
- Before an area was closed, consideration will be given to alternatives to closure, this may include temporary physical redeployment of staff into other teams/office's etc, temporary re-alignment of duties, class mergers, re-arranged classes, on-line

learning, self-directed learning, home working and other such suitable alternatives. There may be different options for different areas depending upon operational needs of the department.

- The College management will take a view as to the “key” staff that must be in work for the buildings to run. If these key staff are absent this may lead to the building (s) being closed.
- Where an emergency situation arises and schools close due to an infection pandemic, the use of the Special Leave procedure will apply.
- A manager may need to consider the use of appropriate mechanisms to inform our learners, customers and other key stakeholders/partners of any changes to normal service delivery. Decisions of this nature must be approved by a member of the Executive Team.

4. Related Policies:

- Special Leave Policy
- Critical Incident Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Management of Attendance Policy