

BRIEF NO: 03/2020

To: Chief Executives and Directors of ETBs

Re: Information on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Please see below some useful links in relation to information available on coronavirus.

The links below (accurate as of 26/2/2020) will be updated regularly on the ETBI website.

- Information for schools, pre-schools and further education centres on the coronavirus which includes posters for schools:
<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html>
- Information for schools and pre-school settings including parents of students/children on novel coronavirus (COVID-19) v2.4 26.02.2020
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/Advice%20for%20schools%20preschool%20settings%20and%20parents%20v2.4.pdf>
- The FAQs link below provides clear advice in relation to the steps to take, prevention, the symptoms, testing, etc
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/frequentlyaskedquestions/#Information%20for%20people%20travelling>
- Schools/Centres in making decisions in relation to this virus should consider the following:
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> (correct of 26/2/20)

If, in the past 14 days, an individual has:

- travelled to Ireland from any of the identified affected countries/regions e.g. China, Italy, Tenerife, etc.
- been in contact with a person who has novel Coronavirus, or
- attended a hospital/healthcare facility where patients with novel Coronavirus are being treated

AND

they feel well and do not have any symptoms of respiratory disease, they only need to: Phone the local Department of Public Health for advice or HSElive on 1850241850. Staff will provide them with information on coronavirus and advise them on what to do if you become sick.

HOWEVER

If in the past 14 days, an individual has:

- travelled to Ireland from any of the identified areas above, or
- been in contact with a person who has novel Coronavirus, or
- attended a hospital/healthcare facility where patients with novel Coronavirus are being treated

AND

they feel unwell, especially with respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, high temperature, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing), then they should:

- self-isolate (i.e. stay separate from other people)
- phone their GP immediately – giving their GP their travel history and symptoms. A GP should be contacted by phone rather than arriving at the GP's surgery without contacting them so that they don't put staff or other patients at risk of infection. Your GP will advise you of the next steps over the phone.

- The links to documents on the HPSC website also details instructions for dealing with situation as they arise, linked below:

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employersguidance/Guidance%20on%20COVID%2019%20for%20workers%20dealing%20with%20the%20general%20public%20v1.pdf>

Summary

Parents will understandably be concerned in the event of student(s) in a school having visited any of the affected areas. The guidelines above should be strictly adhered in reaching any decision to close a school or send students home. Contact with and updating parents through usual methods of communication should continue. It is important to remind parents that consultation with the HSE and the advice and guidance received by the HSE will form the basis of any decision to be taken at school level.

As highlighted in many of the links above, it is also important to remind parents and students of the requirement to work towards preventing the spread of any virus by:

1. Highlighting good respiratory etiquette
2. Hand hygiene
3. Routine cleaning
4. Recognising symptoms, contacting the HSElive number 1850 24 1850 and planning the response.

Issued by: Nessa White, General Secretary

Date: 27 February 2020