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Dear Headteacher

Guidance on staff attendance and travel overseas 25 May 2021

The ongoing challenge of the Pandemic has impacted us all, and for many the desire to travel abroad to see family and friends or to simply have a break is understandable. As school leaders you must temper your desire to support the wellbeing of staff with the need to ensure you are effectively leading the school. You must therefore ensure that you have sufficient staff in place to enable all pupils to attend school in a COVID secure way.

It is therefore imperative that when staff decide to travel abroad, for whatever reason, during periods of school closure, they do so in such a way that they are available to work in school when it is open to pupils.

It is reasonable for you to require staff to inform you if they have booked a holiday abroad or are likely to do so, and to remind them that they must be in a position to return to their workplace at the beginning of term.

It is also reasonable for you to expressly point out that this will preclude staff from travelling abroad to any country not included on the green list over the coming half-term and possibly also holidaying abroad near the end of the summer holidays.

So, the advice is that you should;

- Explain why you need staff to inform you if they are intending to holiday abroad.
- Signpost your staff to keep up-to-date regarding [information about overseas travel](#), including the current quarantine and testing requirements that are in place for red, amber and green list countries.
- Ensure that staff are aware that the rules and requirements for travel both at home and abroad, set by the UK government and by foreign governments may change at short notice
- Write to all employees to explain the consequences, outlined below, if they holiday abroad and are asked to self-quarantine during term or normal working time. Explain that you expect them to notify you if they have travelled abroad or to report their absence and how it will be recorded on their records.

- Be clear whether staff will be paid if they must quarantine. Our expectation is that staff will not be paid in most cases if they must quarantine following travel abroad. Clearly there will be exceptional, typically personal circumstances, that may necessitate such travel and we would expect that in all cases this would be discussed and agreed with school leadership prior to travelling.
- Ensure that when clarifying whether pay will be possible, emphasise that members of staff who must quarantine will only be able to work if it is feasible for them to work from home or from their quarantine hotel. You should explain that unless the DfE have directed schools to move to remote education it will not be possible for teachers and other staff that work directly with children to work from home. Where it is agreed that staff can work remotely, they will be paid at appropriate rates.
- Ensure that staff are aware that if they have travelled to a red or amber list country that they must remain in quarantine until they receive a negative result from their day 8 test (This may mean being away from work for longer than 10 days, if there is a delay in the day 8 test result being received)
- Explain that any support staff that have not used up all their holiday leave may be able to use it during quarantine. But, you should also emphasise that this isn't straightforward as most leave must be taken outside of term time and that the school reserves the right to turn down requests for holidays if the timing doesn't suit you.

In general, if a member of staff can't work, you don't have to pay them unless they are in fact ill. Whilst the [Burgundy Book](#) and the [Green Book](#) have provisions in place for pay when someone cannot attend the workplace due to infectious disease. However, where someone cannot attend work due to isolating because of the quarantine measures following a holiday abroad this **does not** trigger this provision.

A joint [circular](#) issued by the ASCL, LGA and NAHT unions last summer – when the same issue arose – acknowledged that teachers and support staff whose terms and conditions are covered by the Burgundy or Green Books are not entitled to be paid if they self-quarantine in these circumstances after travelling abroad.

Yours sincerely



Gerry Kemble
Assistant Director, Schools

cc Chair of Governing Body