Procedures for Leave and Working Arrangements during COVID-19 outbreak

1 Purpose
The University is following current public health advice in relation to COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). This procedure is to define the University’s approach on leave and working arrangements during the COVID–19 outbreak, while following Health Services Executive (HSE) advice.

2 Scope
The procedure applies to all staff in the University, in particular, staff diagnosed with COVID-19, those that are symptom free but have been in contact with those with COVID-19 and certain high-risk groups which may include those:

- Who are 60 years of age and over
- Who have a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or cancer
- Who are pregnant

3 Procedures for dealing with COVID-19 related absences
3.1 Special leave with pay\(^1\) applies to periods of medically/HSE recommended self-isolation where flexible working arrangements are not possible, and also for those who have a medical diagnosis of COVID-19 infection.

3.2 The general principles applying to the management of sick leave, for example the requirement to contact managers, and for ongoing contact with employees who are on special leave for this purpose will apply.

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\(^1\) Special leave with pay should be based on basic salary and fixed allowances, premium payments are excluded
3.3 Any special leave with pay granted for the purpose of self-isolation or any diagnosis of COVID-19 will not count as part of the staff members sick leave record. The application of special leave with pay will apply for the number of days advised by the HSE/doctor. Appropriate confirmation of the need to self-isolate and a diagnosis of COVID-19 will be required. This will be recorded locally as *CV19 special leave with pay* on the staff members attendance record.

3.4 When granted special leave with pay, staff will be expected to comply at once with any directions which may be given by the University and to take all practicable steps to resume duty as soon as possible, non-compliance with this may result in the withholding of pay.

3.5 In the event of non-compliance with the provisions of special leave with pay (including the requirement to provide bona fide confirmation of self-isolation/diagnosis of COVID-19) existing procedures, including disciplinary measures may be invoked.

4. **Staff that are considered “at risk” (as defined at 2 above)**
   Staff that consider themselves at risk should seek medical advice as to what steps should be taken and discuss this with their Manager in order to explore the possibility of alternative work and/or work location.

5. **Staff and/or family members diagnosed with COVID-19/directed to self-isolate**

5.1 **Staff Diagnosed with COVID-19/directed to self-isolate**
   Staff diagnosed with COVID–19 or directed by their doctor/HSE to self-isolate must inform their Line Manager personally by telephone, as early as possible on the first day of absence confirming the purpose of their absence. Staff will be required to submit medical confirmation from their doctor/HSE retrospectively and as soon as is practical.

5.2 **Staff dealing with localised closures of a school/créche due to COVID-19**
   HSE advice should be followed where a school/creche is closed due to COVID-19.
In instances where it is shown that the staff member is required to care for the child(ren), alternative arrangements e.g. working from home and/or alternative working patterns should be facilitated where possible. The circumstances of each case will be considered by the Head of School /Administrative and Support Area and if appropriate special leave with pay may be applied.

If it is agreed that the staff member must stay at home with the child(ren), then a copy of the HSE letter to parents of the school/creche should be provided by the staff member to their line manager as soon as is practicable. In the case where this is a generically addressed letter\(^2\), evidence that the child(ren) attends the school/.crèche should also be provided by the staff member.

### 5.3 Staff with family members self-isolating other than school children

The HSE advice should be followed in such circumstances. Where an employee does not have the symptoms\(^3\) associated with the coronavirus but has been in contact with someone who recently travelled to an affected area or with an infected person, it may be necessary on risk grounds to ask such people not to attend work. Please seek advice from your doctor /HSE before making this decision, then inform your Line Manager accordingly.

If advised by the HSE that there is no need to self-isolate and the staff member still wishes to stay at home to care for family members they may be able to avail of other forms of leave under the University policies specified below. The granting of any leave is subject to the approval of the Head of School /Administrative and Support Area;

- Annual Leave
- Parental Leave
- Special Unpaid Leave of Absence
- Force Majeure (as defined under the Parental Leave Act 1998)

\(^2\) If HSE letter is generically addressed (e.g.) Dear Parent

\(^3\) A cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever (high temperature)
Alternatively, other arrangements may be explored at the discretion of the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area such as alternative working patterns and working from home, where feasible.

5.4 Procedures for applying for other forms of leave
Applications for any form of unpaid leave (i.e. Parental Leave, Special Unpaid Leave of Absence) must be approved in the first instance by the Head of School/Administrative and Support Area. Completed forms should be posted to HR Services, Human Resources, House 4 or emailed to hr@tcd.ie.

Applications for parental leave should be made using the parental leave application form which can be found on https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-parental-leave.docx. In these extenuating circumstances and on an exceptional basis, the normal notice periods for such applications will be waived and accepted retrospectively.

Applications for Special Unpaid Leave of Absence should be made using the attached application form https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-unpaid-leave.docx.

Force majeure leave applications should be made using the attached application form https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/doc/leave-form-force-majeure.docx

6. Record Keeping
The Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 requires employers to hold records of all forms of leave. It is important that records of all leave (CV19 special leave with pay, annual leave, unpaid leave) are kept locally in each area.

7. Closure of the University
In the event of the University closing indefinitely due to COVID–19, further information will issue.

9th March 2020