



Ebola: advice and risk assessment for educational, childcare and young persons' settings

There is currently an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease occurring in West Africa. It was first reported in March 2014 in Guinea and since late May has involved four countries: Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. (So far all the cases in Nigeria have been linked to transmission from a single imported case; there is no evidence of wider transmission in that country).

Ebola is a rare but serious viral infection. However, people in the UK are not at risk of Ebola, as the virus is only transmitted by direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person. **There have been no cases of Ebola Virus Disease being contracted in the UK** in the current outbreak and the risk of Ebola arriving in the UK is **very low**.

A British national who has been diagnosed with Ebola was repatriated from Sierra Leone in August 2014 under highly controlled conditions for treatment in the UK. It remains unlikely but not impossible that persons infected in Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone could arrive in the UK. The affected countries have introduced exit screening at airports to ensure that individuals who are unwell do not board flights. This is in line with World Health Organization (WHO) guidance and is one of many measures to reduce the risk of international spread of disease. However, as the time between contact with an infected person and symptoms first appearing can range from 2 – 21 days, it is possible that children and students returning from affected countries could develop symptoms up to three weeks after arrival.

In summary:

- the risk of Ebola arriving in the UK is **very low**
- there have been several previous outbreaks of Ebola in other parts of Africa, but none have led to cases being contracted in Europe
- transmission of Ebola from person to person is by direct contact with the blood and body fluids of an ill person with the disease. The virus is **not** spread by the airborne route
- the time between contact with the infected person and the time that first symptoms appear (incubation period) of Ebola ranges from two to 21 days
- any persons arriving back in the UK having travelled from any of the affected countries, and who are free of symptoms, are **not infectious** and there should be **no restrictions** on their school attendance or normal activities

The attached algorithm has been developed specifically to assist educational, childcare and young persons' settings who may have children/students returning or visiting from affected countries.

All staff or those with contact with children should already be aware of what to do if a child/student falls ill and there is general guidance (referenced below) on infection control in school and childcare settings.

Further information about the Ebola outbreak can be obtained from your local health protection team, and on the following websites:

Public Health England (including the outbreak and maps of affected area):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ebola-virus-disease-clinical-management-and-guidance>

WHO:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/index.html>

Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infection-control-in-schools-poster>

Foreign travel advice

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Ebola: environmental cleaning guidance for potential contamination (excluding healthcare settings)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ebola-environmental-cleaning-guidance-for-potential-contamination-excluding-healthcare-settings>

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Ebola risk assessment in educational, childcare and young persons' settings

This algorithm is to inform the assessment of unwell children in educational, childcare and young persons' settings, and will assist the public health response and ensure the appropriate organisations are informed. If the child is unable to answer questions, please seek information from the responsible adult.

