

**UPDATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
As of 3rd March 2020**

Schools are asked to note the following advice in relation to school trips and the Coronavirus (COVID – 19) outbreak.

The Coronavirus (COVID – 19) outbreak is a developing issue which is being closely monitored by governments worldwide including the Northern Ireland Executive. The Department of Education is closely involved in that process in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Public Health Agency.

A number of schools have expressed concerns in relation to whether or not to proceed with plans for scheduled ski trips. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for providing Government advice to all parts of the United Kingdom on travel abroad, and consequently any decision to proceed with or cancel any school trip should be taken by the school in line with the latest Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice which is available at: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Schools should contact the travel agency through which they booked their ski trips and seek their advice and guidance on this matter.

Advice and guidance for the public and educational settings on COVID-19 is provided by the Public Health Agency and GOV.UK.

In relation to educational settings, GOV.UK has published guidance for schools, employers and the travel industry on how to handle suspected cases. The guidance (link attached below) also covers pupils, students and staff returning from school trips in specified areas.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

Advice is also available via the Public Health Agency:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/covid-19-coronavirus>