

Combination of work and care tasks, mandatory quarantine and leave regulations

Because of the new corona measures, which for the time being last until 14 January next year, we work at home again unless there is no other option. At the same time, the quarantine rules have been tightened and the schools are closing one week earlier. As a result, it will occur more frequently that employees who would normally be able to perform all or part of their work at a WUR location will be forced to stay at home because they or a housemate has been infected with the Coronavirus. The number of infections in primary and secondary schools also means that many children who are not infected cannot attend school for a shorter or longer period of time, or are sent home immediately. As a result, colleagues have to combine their home work with care tasks more often.

As a manager, you can therefore expect to be asked questions again about how to deal with situations in which employees cannot combine caring for children with their work or because of quarantine. Or you may receive questions from employees who are not ill themselves, but who cannot come to their work location due to quarantine.

The general rules of the game are listed here below:

- Investigate whether it is possible to organize the work differently;
- Agreements about which type of leave to use are always made to measure;
- Agreements must fit within the rules of the applicable collective agreement;
- It is possible to combine different types of leave:
- If the employee still has a lot of leave hours, discuss whether an employee can take these;
- If all of the above solutions do not help, use special leave.

Here we would like to summarize the advice for specific situations:

- Investigate with the employee whether it is possible to divide the activities in a different way during the (working) week, so that it is easier to combine them with any care duties;
- In case of work that is location-specific: make arrangements together about substitute work that can be done from home. Think for example of temporary other tasks, (self) study, compulsory training and/or the use of compensation hours. Of course, it is also possible for an employee to choose to take holiday leave.
- An employee who does not feel ill but has tested positive for Corona must stay at home; in that case, too, further arrangements will be made about working from home. The same applies to an employee who must go into quarantine while awaiting a test or in connection with the discovery of COVID infection in a housemate.
- An employee who has tested positive for corona and feels ill is subject to the regular absence regulations and process.
- For an employee who has to go into quarantine in connection with returning from abroad on a business trip and alternative work is not possible, the absence is at the expense and risk of the employer.
- For an employee who has to undergo quarantine in connection with returning from a holiday abroad, where it was known that the travel advice was not green at the time of departure, the situation is somewhat different. Agreements about working from home are made with the employee as described above, but should the work not be able to be carried out from home/at a distance in part or in full, the employee himself takes compensatory hours and/or holiday leave (or: unpaid leave in case of insufficient holiday leave). It was the employee's own choice to travel abroad with the risk of quarantine obligations afterwards.
- If an employee works (at home) and cannot combine care duties due to, for example, sudden closure of school or class, the manager can decide to grant emergency leave for a maximum of 1 day due to this acute situation. This is a form of paid special leave. At the same time, you will discuss this with the employee as explained above.