



**Attendance Policy
COVID-19 update**

This update was originated by Chris Endacott, Assistant Headteacher

Version Control

Version 1	
Version 2	
Version 3	
Version 4	

Due for review January 2021

Attendance policy – COVID-19 update

Whilst expectations in our Attendance Policy remain key, it is necessary, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, to make some adjustments for the safety of all pupils and staff. Specifically, this update aims to address all of the questions around attendance and when children should and should not attend school whilst the risk of Covid-19 infection exists.

Expectations re Attendance from September 2020

On the 2nd July the Government released a document to all schools which made clear that from September 2020 all children should return to school full time in all year groups. Since then we as a school have been putting in place plans and measures to ensure that with a greater number of children in school the risks are minimised. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well academically.

This means from September 2020 the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence,
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Exceptions

A small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because:

- 1.They are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves.
2. Because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19).

In both of these cases we would advise parents to contact school as soon as possible to inform us and also their local healthcare professional who will advise parents of any further course of action that may be necessary.

Healthcare professionals may direct parents to attend a testing centre to have a COVID-19 test which can be completed and once results are known the child can return to school sooner.

3. As time has passed by the government now knows much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high.

Shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent (see below). We will notify parents if this needs to take place.

Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. We would encourage parents to do this prior to September so pupils can return full time in September.

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will immediately offer them access to remote education.

Penalties for Non-Attendance

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

This includes:

1. Those that are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves.
2. Those who have had close contact with someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). Track and Trace should contact people if this is the case.
3. Those who have been told to shield by a healthcare professional. Evidence may be requested if this is the case.

If children fail to attend for other reasons we will continue to follow our usual processes for non-attendance.

Reducing Anxiety amongst students and parents

Many pupils have not attended school since March 2020 either through advice from Healthcare Professionals, not being in Years 10 or 13, or not being classed as vulnerable or the children of key workers. The shift to all pupils being back in school from September is clearly a big change in terms of attendance expectations.

Where parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we will contact parents to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures we are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

This is important as we believe securing regular school attendance from the start of term will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.