

COVID- 19 Student Attendance Policy Addendum

Alder CHS Academic Year 2020 – 2021

This document is an addendum to the Student Attendance Policy 2020 – 2021.

For ease of reference, it explains changes made to the student attendance policy for the academic year 2020 – 2021 in view of the current coronavirus pandemic.

This is written in accordance with Department for Education school attendance guidance published in August 2020 and government advice.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 student attendance at school will be compulsory and parents will have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly. School staff will be expected to record attendance, follow up absences and issue sanctions, including penalty notices, in line with the local authority code of conduct.

Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

There are some circumstances where students cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). To ensure that schools record this accurately and consistently, there has been a change to the regulations and a new category of non-attendance has been added 'not-attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. The attendance code is 'X'.

This category can only be used where a student does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend school, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Examples of when it would be appropriate for a student to be absent from school:

A student is required to self-isolate if they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

The student has symptoms

- they should self-isolate and get a test
- if the test is negative and they feel well, no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school
- if the test is positive they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the start of their symptoms. After which they can return to school as long as they have no symptoms other

than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste. This is because those two things can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.

- For registration purposes, code X will be used for the period of isolation until the test. After the student tests positive the absence will be recorded as I (illness) until the student is able to return to school.

A member of the household has symptoms

- the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the student can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- For registration purposes, code X will only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the student can return to school.
- If the member of the household tests positive, the student should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X will be used for this period of absence.

In all cases of self-isolation, school will ask parents to inform us immediately about the outcome of a test. School will not require evidence of a negative test result or other medical evidence before welcoming students back after a period of self-isolation.

Students who have had close contact with someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Students may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- **If there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who needs to self-isolate, advising them to do so for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious.**
- For registration purposes, code X will be used for students during the period of isolation.

Students who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

- As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school holidays and avoid taking their child/children out of school during term time.
- Families should consider that their child may need to self-isolate following a trip overseas that requires a period of quarantine upon return.
- If a student is absent from school due to quarantine, code X will be used in the register.

Students who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1st August 2020. This means that even students who may remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- If in future, rates of the disease rise in this area, students still on the shielding list (or with family members still on the shielding list) may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again and this can be shared with school. Non-attendance in accordance with this guidance will be recorded as code X.
- If this does happen, once the local measures are lifted and shielding is paused again. Parents of students will be contacted by school staff to confirm that they are expected to return to school. After which point code X will no longer be used for absence.

When a child becomes unwell

- Firstly, it is really important that if a child presents with any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) then they remain at home until a test is carried out and the results are received. Those symptoms being: a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of taste or smell. Parents must not send their child into school even if they believe that they are well enough to attend. We must not treat coronavirus symptoms like other common or minor ailments.
- If a student becomes unwell whilst at school, the on-call member of staff will respond. The student will be isolated whilst an initial assessment is carried out by a member of the first aid team which will include a check of their temperature and observation of their symptoms.
- If a student needs to leave the premises, their parent will be contacted to arrange for them to travel home safely.
- It is extremely important that parents ensure that school are aware of any changes to emergency contact details so that parents can be contacted in the event that their child becomes unwell whilst at school and needs to go home. School staff need to be able to contact somebody at any given time so more than one number is advisable.
- At that time, it is not necessary for any other students to self-isolate as a direct response to that child being unwell with symptoms. The guidance states that once a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) test is confirmed then the school and the individuals concerned will be advised by the local health protection team.

Remote education

- If a student is self-isolating in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), school will offer access to remote education. This may be provided electronically through email or through Microsoft Teams.

Student and family contact during absence

- If a student is absent due to issues relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) then weekly contact will be made with the family by the Student Attendance and Family Liaison Officer. This will be to support and advise.
- In cases where a larger cohort are advised to self-isolate then contact with the family will be maintained by the Headway Support Team who will support and advise.