



***Head of School: Mr P. Coiffait***

# **Covid 19 Attendance Policy Addendum**

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**To be reviewed: November 2021**



*Learning for Together ▾ Learning for All ▾ Learning for Life*





Document Control Information			
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COVID 19 Attendance Policy Addendum			
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As guidance changes or every 3 months		Governors / Trustees	
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<b>Document Owner &amp; Reviewer:</b>	The senior manager responsible for this policy is the Head of Site / Headteacher		
<b>Equality Impact</b>			
<b>Statement</b>	<p>We welcome feedback on this document and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that may affect any groups in respect of any of the equalities act 2010 protected characteristics.</p> <p>The person responsible for equality impact assessment for this document is the Director of Equalities and Diversity.</p> <p>This policy has been screened by the Equalities Team and the impact has been assessed as:</p>		
<b>Screening</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p>		

# Covid-19 Attendance policy addendum

## 1. Introduction

The Department for Education issued revised attendance guidance in August 2020 with an addendum relating to recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (Covid-19) during the 2020-2021 academic year: The guidance replaces temporary guidance on recording attendance during the outbreak. Both the guidance and addendum can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Hawthorns Attendance policy addendum sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply.

We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who are concerned about the return to school due to coronavirus

## 2. Guidance and definitions

The law in regards of children attending school has been reinstated from September 2020. Children of compulsory school age must attend regularly to the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996). This means that parents could be penalised if their child does not attend school, unless an authorised reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc)

This addendum reflects the latest advice from Tameside LA and government guidance.

## 3. Attendance expectations

Although it is mandatory for parents /carers to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school from the start of the Autumn term 2020, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend due to coronavirus (Covid-19) in line with public health advice

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, changes have been made to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance -not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (Covid19).

This category will only be used to record sessions in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

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 a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

## 4. Examples where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

### 4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

Children must stay at home if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or have a loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia) to avoid spreading infection to others. We must be contacted and informed of the need for self-isolation, if children have been attending school. Parents/carers must contact the NHS for a Coronavirus test if their child has been sent home displaying symptoms. Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results.

**If the pupil's test result is negative:** the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness)

**If the person the pupil lives with tests negative:** the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school. Code X should be used up until the time of the negative test result and evidence emailed to school.

### 4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' tests positive

- If a pupil tests positive, parents/carers must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible and provide email evidence. School will then work with local public health to trace contacts and advise other pupils and staff to self-isolate as needed.
- Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).
- If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days even if they do not have symptoms. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.

### 4.3. Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad

- The parent/carer must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [exemptions list](#).
- The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.

### 4.4 Pupil is required to shield during a local lockdown

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020.
- If local disease rates rise, children or family members on the shielding list may be contacted and advised to stay at home. Proof of shielding must be shared with school by email/scan/photo.
- Parents/carers of children who are under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their medical condition with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment).
- Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with their specialist health professional's advice they will continue to be offered access to remote education.

- Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to school.
- Absence will not be penalised for any of the above reasons if evidence is submitted to the school.

#### 4.5 Remote learning provision

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus, but where the pupil is not ill, we will provide the pupil access to remote education. Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in our remote learning policy. We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register.

#### 4.6 Local Lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, school may need to prevent some pupils from attending. We will follow government guidelines in the event of a local lockdown.

### 5. Recording attendance – Pupil absence codes

The code for non-attendance in circumstances related to coronavirus is the **X code**.

The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
I	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness). Code x until the time of negative test.
I	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country

<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown

The register will be taken as normal at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions recording pupils

- Present / Absent/Late
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as defined in our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus.

Pupil arrival will be staggered and pupils are required to arrive at their allocated bubble time. All registers will be kept open until 9.30am, after this time pupils will be marked late.

## 6. Following up absence

All absences will be followed up following our normal absence procedures. To support mandatory attendance from September 2020, the guidance revoked the suspension of issuing fixed penalty notices in line with the local authority code of conduct.

It is recognised that, following the school closure, some parents and pupils may be reluctant and/or experience a degree of anxiety when returning to school and Tameside Education Welfare Service (EWS) encourage schools to take a non-punitive approach in the first instance during the first half term and work closely with families; offering reassurances of the measures in place to reduce risk, offer personalised re-engagement plans to identified pupils and signpost to support services where necessary. A number of resources have been produced to support school staff to work with pupils and families in order to offer reassurances.

### 6.1 Legal sanctions

#### Penalty Notice Warnings

Our normal rules on legal sanctions will apply. Individual pupil absence will be monitored and support offered as needed.

#### Holidays in Term Time

The Department for Education has been clear that holidays in term time should not be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances and this remains the case from September 2020. We are mindful of the impact the pandemic has had on children's education and how vital it is that all children do not miss any more school when making our decision if family circumstances meet the exceptional circumstances criteria.

## 7. Support for parents /carers and pupils who do not attend or stop attending

- We will follow up any absence with parents/carers following our first day absence procedures

- We will notify the child's social worker, where they have one

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus:

- We will ensure early identification of any pupil who does not return to school as expected to enable intervention to begin at the earliest opportunity
- We will arrange a phone call/video meeting between the parent/carer and a member of senior staff to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe
- We will provide reassurance that the Government / DfE have stated (almost) all children should be back at school having balanced the risk of Covid against the importance of education and the well-being of pupils.
- The DfE state that very few children will need to shield. If parents are worried about their child's medical condition they should seek advice from their lead medical practitioner.
- We will request evidence in writing to support any pupil remaining absent- this may include medical evidence if available, parent/pupil views and reasons why their child should not return to school
- Shielding arrangements ended on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020, if parents are worried about pupil or adult vulnerability they should seek advice from their lead clinician about any precautions they should be taking and other individual arrangements.
- We will provide parents with updated advice from Public Health available on our school website
- We will provide details of all safety measures that have been put in place including staggered start times, social distancing and bubble arrangements, lunch time arrangements etc. Parents will be signposted to our school Risk assessment and protocols.
- We will establish exactly where parents see risk: is it the journey to school for example?
- We will ask parents to put in writing what they see as a solution and if they have an end date in mind.
- We will explain the benefits of face to face teaching & working with peers over remote learning that has taken place while schools have been closed.
- We will consider implementing a personalised re-engagement plan; different start time, a phased return and access to pastoral staff.
- We will provide/signpost to resources for supporting pupils returning to school
- We will consider a referral to the Early Help Team via the Team around the School, school nurse or other medical contact. Our school counsellor is available to support both pupil and parents.
- As a last resort we will state the Government and school expectation that attendance is mandatory and enforceable with legal action.
- We will keep a record of all support and inform the SEN team of long-term absence.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated.

## 8. Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.