**Re opening of schools September 2020**

(Addendum) SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY from September 2020 until review date January 2021

Please refer to and upload a version of the addendum to your website for parents to reference

**Guidance for schools on absence management from September 2020**

**Exceptional circumstances**

As you know, there is no entitlement to leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Each Headteacher can determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance and authorise leave based on individual cases.

This year, because of the pandemic and restrictions on travel, schools will need to consider some additional factors when assessing requests for **exceptional** **leave**. Whilst we expect every child to attend school, some families will want to travel to see other family members who they have not been able to visit since lock-down or to pay respects to those who have passed away. There will also be families who have been asked to rebook a holiday or are in receipt of travel vouchers; these may have a use by date.

Key workers may also be restricted to when they can take leave from their workplace. Please treat all requests for **exceptional leave** sensitively and continue to ask for supporting evidence as necessary. You may want to put some information on your website to remind parents to keep **holidays** within school holiday breaks.

**Building Community Confidence**

The expectation is that **all children** will return to school in September 2020. Where pupils do not return or where attendance is irregular, please follow normal absence procedures; phone calls, emails, letters of concern etc and refer to the School Attendance Service for us to make additional checks and enquiries and to contact the family.

Initially, in September, this service will be continuing to offer welfare visits and supportive communications with parents rather than issuing fines routinely. However, we will consider more pressing cases individually. Where appropriate, we will sign post to other support agencies and work in partnership with those and with school to maximise attendance.

This interim measure is dependent on Covid risk/prevalence in September and moving forward. We will review this position regularly in line with Public Health guidance.

**Sanctions (absence and lateness)**

Absences should be challenged sensitively and authorised only where satisfactory evidence has been provided. It is anticipated that by October half term, we will be able to issue warnings followed by Fines from the new calendar year; January 2021.

However, serious cases will be considered individually and prioritised as necessary; please discuss cases of concern with School Attendance (your Link Officer). **Whilst we understand that each school will want to move forward with Sanctions at their own pace, the key consideration in deciding whether to issue a penalty notice at this time will be whether it is reasonable and will be effective in helping to get the pupil who is not attending, back into school.**

**Existing PA’s and vulnerable pupils – Attendance concerns**

PA’s and those pupils who are vulnerable or reluctant/anxious to attend and have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic; please refer these to School Attendance for early help/additional support/encouragement/home visit and for us to develop plans for re-engaging them.

These cases can be discussed individually with your Link Officer. We can also try to keep in contact with these families over the Summer Break and prepare to work with families from September.

**Reception and year 7 No-Shows September 2020**

Please remember to follow the **Reasonable Enquiry** guidelines for Pupils on a pre-admission list/register for Reception and year 7 children who do not arrive on the expected start date. You may want to try to establish contact early this year as there may be a lot of movement in Ealing due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Day 1 of non-attendance

Telephone/email/text parents and all named contacts to establish child’s whereabouts.

Day 3

Contact Link Attendance Officer and begin completing ‘**Reasonable Enquiry Form’**, documenting contact attempts. The Attendance Officer will make agency checks and discuss carrying out a home visit.

Send ‘where are you’ letter to home address.

Continue to telephone/email/text parents and all named contacts

Day 10

If no contact is established by day 10, despite preliminary checks/home visit having been carried out by Link Attendance Officer for Primary Schools and Safer School’s Officer for High Schools, send completed ‘**Reasonable Enquiry Form’** to the Children Missing Education Officer; CME@ealing.gov.uk and await further instruction. **Do not remove from role until agreed with CME Officer**.

**SEND**

Please make all necessary adjustments to allow for SEN pupils to attend full time. Where individual plans and risk assessments require a phased return for children, continue to **offer access to education at home resources**. Monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately.

**Who can’t be in school?**

No one with symptoms or where someone else in the household has symptoms should attend school for any reason. (please refer to the NHS testing website) *If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the school should discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.* [***shielding list***](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating - The majority of pupils will be able to return to school, please see: [**shieldi****ng list**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)  Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, offer **access to education at home resources**. Monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately.

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

**Quarantine**

Please request evidence where a parent claims they are required to quarantine - Current advice on [**t****rav****el corridors**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors)

**Absence**

There has been no new **coding guidance** from DfE for September; this is awaited, particularly to know if the Y code will still be applied, where for instance shielding remains essential or the school need to make partial closures. The DfE say *‘We will issue further technical guidance for schools to record attendance and absence, including what data schools will be asked to return to the department’*

* Families should notify their school as normal if a child is unable to attend on any given day and provide regular updates for on-going absence.
* Please follow normal procedures for absence and request verification as normal and code accordingly.
* If a family is ‘stuck’ abroad due to lock down, parents must provide schools with detailed information of their whereabouts, reason for travel and estimated return date. (this will determine how absence is coded; authorised or unauthorised) If information is not provided please follow CME process.
* 3-day no contact; please contact **School Attendance Link Officer** to make enquiries/home visit (High Schools to carry out own home visit where possible)
* 10-day no contact; please submit Reasonable Enquiry form to CME@ealing.gov.uk. Please keep child on roll until advised by CME Officer to remove.

**Leavers (including CME)**

(**Absence for whatever reason cannot be back dated**) Refer to DfE guidance in SLA 20/21. Or, contact Lucinda to discuss lpoole@ealing.gov.uk .

**Punctuality**

Please record lateness as normal; inform parents that frequent/significant lateness (on their given start time if staggered) will be unauthorised and referred to School Attendance.

Link to DfE Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>