

(Addendum) EXAMPLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY for full school re-opening September 2020

This document does not replace our existing **Attendance Policy** which can be found on our website at.....but it outlines our attendance procedures for the period of school re-opening from September 2020 until matters are reviewed in January 2021.

Please refer to DfE guidance at the end of this document for information on **vulnerability and shielding and **what parents and carers need to know about schools reopening**.*

SCHOOL NAME:

Background

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child’s non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running and we understand more about the measures we need to put in place to create a safer environment in school. **All children**, in all year groups, should return to school full time from the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 2020. It is vital for **all children** to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children’s education, wellbeing and wider development.

It continues to be the aim that all pupils, in all year groups, remain in school full-time. However, for as long as coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community and local restrictions apply, judgments will need to be made at a school level about how to balance minimising risks from coronavirus (COVID-19), by maximising control measures, with providing a full educational experience for children, which will be virtual for most children.

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Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. **School Attendance** is therefore mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn Term in September 2020. This means from that point, we welcome your child back into school and the usual rules on **School Attendance** will apply, including:

- Parents’ duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil 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

Returning to School

All Pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been **authorised** by the school (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary and authorised religious observance etc). Or, where local restrictions apply.

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We understand that some children, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. This may also include some pupils with EHCP plans.

A small number of children will still be unable to attend school in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) Engaging with the NHS Test and Trace

process means that cases can be identified and action taken - this means if your child develops symptoms, you should arrange for them to [get a test](#) and you should inform school of the results of that test.

If your child is unable to attend school for this reason or because you consider they may have other risk factors, you should talk to your child's class teacher so that we can understand your situation and discuss what support is in place in school and in terms of access to education at home resources (remote education).

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 in September (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). This may also apply to some pupils with **EHCP** plans. The school may contact the SEND and School Nursing Teams for advice and support, and we may require medical verification or other relevant documentation in order to assess risk. View link [current advice on shielding](#)

If your child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources (Remote learning). We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHCP plans where parents will be involved in the planning of a child's return to school.

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

Exceptional leave (optional)

There is no entitlement to leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks. If you need to take your child out of school for an **exceptional circumstance**, you must apply in writing and seek permission from the school as usual. Please also consider that your child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. View link [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#)

If you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK during the lock-down period or travelling abroad and you have been told to quarantine, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. Please discuss such circumstances with the school and provide documentary evidence in support of absence; the school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform their decision to authorise absence or not. Current advice on [travel corridors](#)

Outbreaks

In the event of a local outbreak, the school or number of schools may need to close temporarily to help control transmission. If this is the case, the school will provide your child with education at home resources (remote education).

Punctuality

Some groups of children will be given staggered start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Where this is the case, you will be informed. Staggered start and finish times will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time each child receives. Please ensure your child arrives on time and is collected on time in order to minimise disruption. Please contact the school ahead if you are experiencing difficulties. *If lateness persists, the school will want to discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will **not be authorised***

and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority **School Attendance Service**, who may invite you to agree a Parenting Contract to improve matters.

Please refer to our 'drop off and collection' arrangements and **be aware that the gathering of parents at the school gates and otherwise coming onto the site without an appointment is not allowed.**

Management of non-attendance:

Families should notify their school as normal if your child is unable to attend on any given day and update the school regularly regarding on-going absence.

Where a child is not regularly attending the school **or engaging with remote learning**, we will want to discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree with you some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. We will follow our normal absence procedures **as necessary** to establish the reasons for absence (please refer to our main Attendance Policy found on our website at.....) Where our efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or time keeping, we will refer to the local authority School Attendance Service for additional support, advice and ultimately parental enforcement.

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Referrals to the Local Authority (LA)

All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the LA School Attendance Service to seek additional advice and support for parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and or persistent, sanctions will be imposed and will include warnings, penalty notices (Fixed Penalty Fines), prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home due to the pandemic/travel restrictions, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to the whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy) Where such cases are not satisfactorily explained and evidenced, we cannot guarantee to hold a place open for your child.

Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted in **exceptional circumstances** at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. **There is no entitlement to time off during term time for the purpose of a holiday.**

Children Missing Education (CME)

Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A door-step home welfare visit will also be undertaken.

Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the **LA Children Missing Education Officer (CME officer)** who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with Ealing Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.

*** Guidance on vulnerability and shielding**

<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>

*** Guidance on schools reopening**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>