COVID-19: Attendance Policy

Temporary Operational Annex

Attendance Policy

Background

This temporary operational annex to our Attendance Policy sets out the procedures for pupils attendance in school during COVID-19.

In response to COVID-19 the way that we are currently operating in schools is different than usual. However, important attendance principles remain the same.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with the local authorities' codes of conduct

For the academic year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this DfE guidance for further information, including advice on the application of code X.

Please note that this code is not counted as an absence in the school census. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus.

Please see the table below to identify where the X code can be applied:

Where a negative result is sought		
For the time period during isolation until a test result is sought	Stay at home	Code X
If the pupil remains unwell following a negative test	Stay at home	Code I
If a pupil tests negative, feels well and no longer has symptoms similar to Covid-19	Return to school	Usual codes apply
Where a positive result is sought		
For the time period during isolation until a test result is sought	Stay at home	Code X
If the pupil tests positive for Covid-19	Stay at home	Code I
Where somebody in the household has symptoms		
For the time period during isolation until a test result is sought	Stay at home	Code X
Where the household member tests negative	Return to school	Usual codes apply
Where the household member tests positive	Stay at home	Code X
Where a pupil is required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of somebody who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus		
Whilst the student is self-isolating for 14 days	Stay at home	Code X
Other		
Where a child returns from a location abroad which requires quarantine	Stay at home	Code X
Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC	Stay at home	Code X
In the event of a local lockdown	Students directed not to attend	Code X

Action for all WAT schools

We are asking schools to work with families (positively encourage) to secure regular school attendance from the start of term (September 2020) as this will be essential to help pupils accelerate their learning, make progress and promote their well-being and wider development.

We are expecting schools to:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the new school year and build the confidence of parents/carers to send their child/children to school due to the robust COVID-19 procedures that are in place.
- identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic
- work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance