Eastington Primary School

Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum

October 2020

Aims and scope

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

This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It 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.

Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) guidance on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.

Where we refer to 'close contact', this means:

- Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
- Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person

This definition is from the DfE's guidance on full reopening for schools (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

Attendance expectations

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was increasing, Government made it clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, 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.

School attendance is now mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term 2020. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school
- 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

It is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age to attend school unless:

- They have been granted an authorised absence by the school in line our normal attendance policy
- They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see below)

Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We understand 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' 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 (EG: following self-isolating/ test and trace advice)
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus (EG: moving to Tier 4 of the Governments plan for reducing transmission)
- pupils who have been asked to shield by a health professional – though guidance to schools has explained this is less likely than in March.

Remote learning provision and attendance

If a pupil is not attending school because of circumstances related to coronavirus such as self-isolating for a block of time, but where the pupil is not ill, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education. Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in the remote learning policy.

Children will be expected to engage in remote learning. We have a legal duty to keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning. DfE may ask for this information on our daily attendance return.

Whether children are working at home or at school, parents and carers will need to follow the usual procedure of calling the school if a child is ill as soon as possible at the start of the day. We will notify the teacher/TAs so they are aware. We will follow-up any pupil not attending school/engaging in home learning in the usual way.

Recording attendance

When children are working at school, we will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances' (as per our normal attendance policy)
- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

Pupils must arrive in school at their designated time slot on each school day. This is different than our usual entry time slot due to staggered starts.

When working at home, teachers leading remote learning will take a register daily to acknowledge engagement in home learning through attending Zooms, sharing working etc.. This information will help us track pupil engagement and enable us to support if needed. It will also inform our daily attendance return to DfE.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school/remote learning does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by phone
- Notify their social worker, where they have one, if we have concerns/are unsure of the reason for absence

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will work with the child/parent to support the return of the pupil. This may be via phone or face to face with self-distancing is maintained/masks are worn. The protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe are shared in the RA found on the website.

Monitoring arrangements

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

Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

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)
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
X	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
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown