

Addendum to the Attendance Policy due to the circumstances of COVID-19 (September 2020)



School attendance is once again mandatory from the beginning of the autumn term.

This means that from September the usual rules on school attendance will apply; **see main policy for details.**

These include:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered student at school 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.

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

It is vital that we support the minimisation of the spread of COVID-19 infection within the school environment and surrounding communities. Therefore, **no one with symptoms of Covid-19 should attend school for any reason.**

The main symptoms are: a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).

Please see our guidance 'Procedure for dealing with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19' which is available on our website for further information.

No parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session.

1. 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. We will communicate any changes to staff, parents and pupils.

2. 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.

In section 4.2 of this addendum, 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').

3. Attendance expectations

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 with guidance in this section of our normal attendance policy
- They cannot attend school due to specific circumstances related to coronavirus (see section 4, below)

4. Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

We will only accept '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
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

4.1 Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

The pupil's parent/carer 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

4.2 Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible by telephoning the school office on 0191 5170006.

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. 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.

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

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

The parent/carer will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan to office@eppletonacademyprimary.co.uk or a photocopy to the school address (Church Road, Hetton le Hole, DH5 9AJ).

The pupil will stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carer to set the expectation that they can return to 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, the school will provide the pupil access to remote education.

Daily directed tasks for English, Maths and a foundation subject will be shared with parents via Class Dojo. Pupils will also continue to have access to virtual learning platforms that they are familiar with from use in school such as Reading Plus, Lexia, Times Tables Rockstars and Purple Mash.

Completed home learning is to be uploaded each day via Dojo and teachers will respond and give feedback.

Class Dojo will be used to maintain contact between children at home and their class teacher in school.

We will monitor pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register.

5. Recording attendance

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'
- 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 within their designated time slot on each school day. Staggered start times will be used each day.

The register for the first session will be taken from 8:45am and will be kept open until 9:10am. As dinner times are staggered with 2 sittings, the register for the second session will be taken when children return from their dinner break at either 12:30pm or 1:15pm and all afternoon registers will close 10 minutes after the start of the afternoon session (12:40pm or 1:25pm).

6. Following up absence

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

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by a telephone call.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one.

After such a long time away from school, we are well aware that we may have children who remain anxious or are reluctant to return to school. We will support pupils in returning to school and help them to settle. We are aware that parents may also be anxious and we invite parents to view our 'Detailed guidance for parents for September' and the 'Guidance on preparing your child to return to school' which can be found in the parents' section of the school website.

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

- Arrange a phone call/video meeting/in-school appointment between the parent/carers and a member of the SLT to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe

6.1 Legal sanctions

Normal rules on legal sanctions apply.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum every 2 months during term time by Mrs L Jackson (attendance lead & DHT). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

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