

Attendance policy: COVID-19 addendum

Mark Rutherford School



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Contents

1. Scope
2. Prevention
3. Expectations on parents/carers
4. Encouraging and maintaining good attendance to school
5. Becoming unwell at school
6. Non attendance in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)
7. Register coding
8. Safeguarding
9. Links with other policies
10. Links to Government guidance

1. Scope

This addendum is to support Mark Rutherford schools existing attendance policy.

From September 2020, attendance to school will be mandatory. Mark Rutherford will continue to promote excellent attendance; thus enabling and encouraging all pupils to achieve. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils. Securing good attendance is a fundamental responsibility within our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our school.

Mark Rutherford will reinforce that it is the parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age. The risk to children themselves becoming severely ill from COVID 19 is extremely low, there are however negative health impacts of not attending school.

It is Mark Rutherford's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence. The school will continue to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with the local authorities' codes of conduct, however we would like to ensure we have exhausted every alternative option prior to issuing sanctions, including fixed penalty notices. It is therefore vital, that we work together to try to resolve attendance problems.

Pupils, parents and staff should continue to follow our normal attendance policy with respect to anything not covered in this addendum.

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 students.

2. Prevention

- In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 the school has implemented a number of safety measures which must be adhered to by staff and students. These can be found on our school website in our risk assessments

- If a student or a member of their household becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must follow the Government guidance named *'stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID19) infection'*, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.
- Students, parents and staff follow the Government guidelines named *'meeting people from outside your household'*

3. Expectations on parents/carers

- To promote the attendance of their child to school, provided they are well enough to be in school
- To work with the school or other professionals to improve attendance
- To not send their child to school if the child or any member of their household are experiencing symptoms
- Parents/carers to contact school if their child becomes unwell
- For parents/carers to arrange for testing immediately if their child or any member of their household develops symptoms related to COVID-19
- Parents/carers to communicate with school immediately if their child or a member of their household is diagnosed with Covid-19
- If their child is self-isolating, to encourage school work to be completed, provided the child is well enough

4. Encouraging and maintaining good attendance to school

- Clear and consistent expectations around school attendance will be communicated to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate)
- Parents have been given the opportunity to identify if their child is reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement. Pastoral staff will be working with these families and will help to develop plans for re-engaging them. This will 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.
- Staff will 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.

5. Becoming unwell at school

- If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow *'stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID19) infection'*, which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus

(COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

- If a child has symptoms of Coronavirus and is awaiting collection, they will be moved to a room where they can be isolated, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, we will move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
- If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they will use a separate bathroom (directed by school staff). The bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the '*Safe working in education childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)*' guidance.
- Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive, or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test & Trace.

6. Non-attendance in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from September 2020, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). The following guidance has been taken from '*Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year*'

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- If symptoms develop, the student and household should immediately seek medical advice
- If a pupil tests negative and they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID 19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19)
- The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-

isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

- As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding
- If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.
- Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school
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If a student is self-isolating, school work will be sent home for the student to complete, provided they are well enough to complete it.

As per Government guidance, in the event that a parent or guardian insists on a child attending school, Mark Rutherford can take the decision to refuse the child if in our reasonable judgement it is necessary to protect our pupils and staff from possible infection with coronavirus (COVID-19)

7. Register coding

A student will be coded as I (Illness) in the following scenarios:

- Following a negative COVID-19 test result and the student remains feeling unwell and unable to attend school
- Following a positive test result, for the remainder of their period of isolation

A student will be coded as X in the following scenarios:

- School closure/partial closure due to local lockdown
- A student awaiting a COVID-19 test result
- A student awaiting the test result of a member of their household. If the test is negative, the student must return to school immediately
- A member of the students household tests positive for coronavirus and therefore the student must isolate for 14 days
- The local health protection team advise that a student should be isolating following close contact with a person who has been confirmed with coronavirus
- Quarantine following a trip overseas
- If advice is given by the Government for particular vulnerable groups to shield

7. Safeguarding

- We will continue to apply all safeguarding responsibilities connected to pupil attendance at school as detailed in the attendance and safeguarding policy.
- Non-attendance of timetabled pupils will be followed up in the usual way and the reason for absence will be documented on SIMS
- Where every effort has been made to contact a family of a child that has failed to attend and there are safeguarding concerns, a home visit may be required. No staff member should enter the property, they should ensure that social distancing is adhered to. If further concerns are raised reporting should take place through the normal channels.

Guidance for staff when undertaking home visits.

- Do not enter the home
- Knock on the door and then speak to parent/carer and child from a safe distance ideally 2 metres from the front door
- If a family is self-isolating, view the child through a window and ascertain as best you can through gestures, thumbs up, waving, lip reading, etc. that the child is safe and well
- It is important to physically **see** the child, even if only through a window
- The home visit must be completed with another member of staff

8. Links with other policies

- Safeguarding policy
- Attendance policy
- Remote learning policy

9. Links to Government guidance

'Stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID19) infection' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

'Meeting people from outside your household' <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household-from-4-july>

Safe working in education childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

'Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>