

# Attendance & Exceptional Leave Policy Addendum

Updated from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## 1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school partial opening due to COVID-19 pandemic third national lockdown from January 5<sup>th</sup> 2021. It sets out changes to our normal attendance and exceptional leave policy and procedures in light of the Department for Education's guidance that parents will not be fined for their children not attending school during this time.

Unless covered here, our normal attendance & exception leave policy continues to apply.

## 2. Core school attendance principles

It is our primary aim to have accurate attendance information during the phased return period. For safeguarding purposes, we need to know where our children are whether they are attending school or their parents have chosen to keep them at home. Where year-groups are open, we will encourage all our children to attend school but ultimately will respect each parents' final decision.

## 3. Process for recording daily attendance

| Step | Action  | Person(s) responsible       |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1    | Electronic registers are created in advance of each daily session   | SLT / pastoral team         |
| 2    | Group leader (Key worker provision or year team mini-groups) complete the register electronically.<br><b>(NB- registers should not be displayed on IWB as they contain confidential information)</b>  | Group leaders               |
| 3    | Group leader (Key worker provision or year team mini-groups) emails the register to the people with the following responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office / Admin staff</li> <li>Attendance officer</li> <li>Nominated staff member</li> <li>Headteacher</li> </ul> | Group leaders               |
|      | Admin staff member – uses the information provided to complete Sims register  | Admin staff                 |
|      | Attendance officer makes first day calls for absent children expected in school   | Attendance office           |
|      | Nominated staff member collates attendance figures using an agreed proforma (this could be a person working from home)  | Nominated staff member      |
|      | Nominated staff members pass collated figures to the following people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kitchen staff (for preparation of meals)</li> <li>Headteacher</li> </ul>  | Nominated staff member      |
|      | Headteacher completes required daily return to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority</li> <li>Department for Education</li> </ul>   | Headteacher & Admin Manager |

## 4. Codes Summary

Attendance codes to be used during the partial opening of schools to be used until the publication of DfE guidance.

| Code | Reason   |
|------|--|
| /    | If child is eligible to access provision and in school.              |
| X    | Pupils who are not eligible to attend the session. (Remote Learning) |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| C   | Grant a leave of absence.<br>Pupils who are eligible to attend the session but do not. E.g. shielding, self-isolating, due to illness or EHCP where children cannot be in school as needs can't be safely met. |
| <b>*At this time, all absences should be classed as authorised.</b> |  |

## 5. Regularly communicating home

School will continue with 'first day calling' to families where parents have informed school they intend to send their child into school. Calls will be made in the order of group arrival times (i.e. – children in groups scheduled to enter school at 8.45am will be called first).

## 6. Managing 'lates'

Late will be defined as a child entering the school after 9.30am when all gates are closed and will be signed in through the main office. Early Years children and Year 1 will be escorted to their designated classroom if arriving late. Year 6 pupils will make their own way to their classroom.

## 7. Vulnerable children whose parent's chose to keep their children at home

The definition of vulnerable children and young people includes children who have a social worker, an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or who may be vulnerable for another reason at local discretion ("otherwise vulnerable"). 26 Schools are expected to allow and strongly encourage vulnerable children and young people to attend. Parents/carers of vulnerable children and young people are strongly encouraged to take up the place.

If vulnerable children and young people do not attend, schools should:

- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) to follow up with the parent or carer to explore the reason for absence, discussing their concerns using supporting guidance considering the child's circumstances and their best interests
- work together with the local authority and social worker (where applicable) and other relevant partners to encourage the child or young person to attend educational provision, particularly where the social worker agrees that the child or young person's attendance would be appropriate

Where schools grant a leave of absence to a vulnerable child or young person they should still speak to parents and carers, and social workers (where applicable) to explore the reasons for this and any concerns raised. The discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and ensuring that the child or young person is able to access appropriate education and support while they are at home.

Where providers have had to temporarily stop on-site provision on public health advice, they should inform the local authority to discuss alternative arrangements for vulnerable children and young people and work towards welcoming back pupils as soon as possible, where feasible to do so.

Regardless of setting, schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with other schools and education providers and other local partners (including the local authority, social workers, police, youth services, key workers etc.) to maximise opportunities for face-to-face provision for vulnerable children.

Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak guidance from the DfE (updated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020) states:

*"Vulnerable children and young people's attendance are expected, where it is appropriate for them (that is, where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan) so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children and young people – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to nursery, early years, school or college provision where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. A brief summary of attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children and young people is as follows:*

- *For vulnerable children and young people who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on [households with possible coronavirus infection](#), and [shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable](#)).*
- *For vulnerable children and young people who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following [risk assessment](#), that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in the educational environment.*
- *For vulnerable children and young people who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school, college or local authority discretion, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable (see the advice set out by Public Health England on [households with possible coronavirus infection](#), and [shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable](#)).*

*For all these groups, educational providers, local authorities, social workers, parents/carers and other relevant professionals (where applicable) should work together closely to consider factors, such as the balance of risk, including health vulnerabilities, family circumstances, risks outside the home, and the child or young person's assessed special educational needs, where relevant. The sections below set out specific considerations that these partners may wish to consider when determining whether attendance is appropriate.*

*Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend educational provision. We expect educational providers and other relevant partners to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school, where attendance is appropriate."*

In line with this guidance, school leaders and pastoral teams will continue to support families of vulnerable children and encourage them to access schooling provided.

## **8. Monitoring & review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated as soon as DfE issue updated school attendance guidance in light of third national lockdown and partial school opening.