

## Addendum: COVID-19 School Attendance Policy June 2020

### Is attendance compulsory?

**Eligible children (including priority groups)** - are strongly encouraged to attend their educational setting, unless they are self-isolating, or they are clinically vulnerable.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, children should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Families should notify their school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together.

***Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.***

We do expect schools to work with and support the relevant families and pupils to return to school.

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the law has been relaxed, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

### **Can the children of critical workers and vulnerable children still attend school, even if they are not in priority years?**

Yes. Now that we have made progress in reducing the transmission of coronavirus, we are encouraging all eligible children to attend settings (where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household), even if parents are able to keep their children at home.

Vulnerable children and young people of all year groups are expected to attend educational provision where it is appropriate for them to do so.

### **How can schools encourage pupils to attend and maintain good attendance?**

For those pupils eligible to attend, schools should address absence by sensitively exploring parents' and pupils' concerns and what is preventing attendance and work with them to re-engage pupils where appropriate. Families should notify their school as normal if their child is unable to attend. Schools should also continue to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

Schools should work together with the EWO and other relevant partners to support parents and children in their return to regular attendance. When working to improve attendance, schools and other partners should consider the individual circumstances of each child and parent in order to ensure that they are appropriate to the child's needs. Schools may wish to focus support particularly on pupils who were previously persistently absent or at risk of being so.

No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Schools should continue to inform social care where children with a social worker do not attend.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children and young people will continue to attend educational provision, where it is appropriate for them to do so.

In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker (where appropriate) and educational setting should explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school or social worker should talk through these concerns with the parent following the advice set out by [Public Health England](#). Educational settings should notify the child's social worker (where relevant) where the child does not attend school.

Where applicable, designated safeguarding leads and/or equivalent staff should keep under review their lists of vulnerable children and young people who should be attending provision. Education providers and other professionals will want to work together to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children and young people (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason), such as by email, phone or visit. To support this, educational settings should take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

Schools should resume taking the attendance register following re-opening to more pupils. Guidance on completing the attendance register at this time, along with which codes to use, is available. Schools should also continue to submit the [Educational Setting Status form](#) via the online portal to report whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school.

Schools should have a policy on how long the register should be kept open and where a school implements staggered start times, they may wish to consider temporarily extending this period

***Schools and colleges will not be held to account for attendance levels at this time.***

### **Attendance Registers -**

#### **Schools should:**

- resume taking the attendance register when more groups of pupils begin to return to school
- consider using the attendance and absence codes in the following sections when completing the attendance register until further notice
- This guidance on resuming the attendance register will be reviewed regularly as the situations develops.

### **Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session**

This includes any pupil who is not in an eligible year group or priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children). This may also include children who are in an eligible year group but are not required in school for a specific session, i.e., year 10 and year 12 pupils who are not among the quarter of pupils expected in school at a given time.

They should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). (Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children – usually it is only used where non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.)

### **Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not**

This includes children in eligible year groups, children of critical workers and vulnerable children, such as:

- where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating, or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, they should be recorded as code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation
- where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as code I (illness). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms
- where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate

At this time, all absence should be classed as authorised.

### **Pupils who are attending other schools**

#### **Where a pupil is attending:**

- another school at which they are registered, as would normally be the case, code D (dual registered) should be used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question as they are attending the other school at which they are registered
- a host school on a temporary basis because their home school cannot accommodate them, the pupil will not be registered at the host school. The home school should record the pupil as attending an approved education activity using code B (off-site educational activity) - the host school does not need to add this child to their attendance register but should keep a record of their attendance for safeguarding purposes and include the child in their daily totals for the educational setting status form - schools should put in place arrangements whereby the host school notifies the home school of any absences.

### Using other authorised absence and attendance codes

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools may want to use these as usual, such as code M (medical appointment).

### Staggered start times

Schools should have a policy on how long the register should be kept open but where a school implements staggered start times, they may wish to consider temporarily extending this period, or reopening the register.

The EWO will continue to work with schools to monitor the welfare of vulnerable children who are not attending school, and other pupils they might wish to keep in touch with, for safeguarding purposes. Further information is set out in the [vulnerable children guidance](#).

***Attendance figures (using agreed categories) each day (by noon) will be reported to the trust EWO.***