

Attendance expectations

In March, when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the Government made 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. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the Autumn Term.

Schools have been advised to be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies. This means from the beginning of Autumn Term, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil 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

Pupils who are self-isolating

Schools are required to note that:

- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who are shielding

Due to knowing much more about coronavirus (COVID-19), the Government recognises that in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school.

Schools are required to note that:

- shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Click here to read the [current advice on shielding](#)
- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, their absence will not be penalised and we will endeavour to offer them access to remote education.

Please let the school know as soon as possible if your child may not be returning to school due to complying with clinical advice.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

We appreciate the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school in September. For example, if they have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, or those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable.

If you are feeling concerned about your child/ren returning to school, please contact the school as soon as possible to discuss this with us.