



## Addendum to St. Aidan's Attendance and Punctuality policy, COVID-19

*Written in line with most recent advice from government and the Haringey Education Welfare Service.*

### **1. What is the most recent government guidance in relation to school attendance?**

The advice is that no-one with symptoms should attend school. Families should notify schools through the normal channels if their child is unable to attend, i.e. via e mail to the school office. If non-medical barriers to attending are cited, schools and professionals should work with families to address these. Vulnerable children and young people should all be encouraged by schools to attend.

The most recent DfE guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings/process-for-recording-attendance-and-using-the-educational-setting-status-form#register>

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.

The government has advised that parents will not be fined, and schools will not be held to account at the current time if some families choose not to send their child into school.

Schools should resume taking their attendance register *and* complete the daily Department for Education data submission on registers.

## **2. Should schools now start taking registers again?**

When schools re-open, registers must be taken as normal for those year groups expected to attend. The codes to be used to reflect presence, absence and not required to attend are set out in this guidance. The current return to the Department for Education is still required as well.

## **3. How should schools code in registers any pupils who are not expected to attend school?**

Children who are expected to attend school should be marked in the normal way. For example, A if present, I if off sick and C if there is no explanation for absence, or if the parent refuses to send their child to school. Unauthorised absence codes are not to be used. For those year groups not expected to attend yet, they may continue to be marked as X. This will not affect attendance figures for DfE purposes.

For those who are expected to attend but are not currently able to return to school due to travel restrictions (for example difficulties in arranging flights home), the Y code may be used. This will not affect attendance figures for DfE purposes.

Further guidance in relation to mode of travel is expected from the government.

## **4. What should schools do in the case of parents who are suspected to have returned to their country of origin?**

If it has been confirmed that the family are no longer in the UK and are not planning to return, we may decide to delete that child from registers.

If we suspect that a family are no longer in Haringey, checks will need to be made to determine the family's whereabouts. A referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will allow further checks to be undertaken. If a pupil has been absent for 20 continuous school days, and despite checks being made, the child's whereabouts remain unknown, the child may be deleted from registers. If the child was absent prior to the lockdown, this period will also contribute to the 20-day period, so long as the period of absence is continuous. If the family are confirmed to be out of the borough and are not planning to return, you may decide to delete the child from registers.

If, after all reasonable enquiries have been made and the family's whereabouts are not confirmed, the child may be deleted from roll after 20 consecutive school days of absence. The period of lockdown is not to be counted as part of the 20-day period.

## **5. How should schools code pupils who are expected to attend, but whose parents refuse, citing anxiety?**

If a parent states that their child is unable to attend school due to travel issues, the child can be marked as Y in registers, and can then be marked in the usual way when the family return to the borough.

If a family state that they are reluctant to send their child to school due to anxieties, the child's absence should be marked as C, as the government have stated that any absence

should not be marked as unauthorised at this time. If the parents state that they, or another household member is displaying symptoms, the absence can be marked as Y, which will not affect attendance.

## **6. What should schools do if a parent states that a child or family member has symptoms (whether genuine or not)?**

It will be very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the veracity of a parent's claim that there are symptoms displayed at home.

In the period immediately before lockdown, many parents (and staff members) stated that they were displaying symptoms. In such cases, they were taken at their word. If the parents state that they, the child or another household member is displaying symptoms, the absence can be marked as Y, which will not affect attendance.

Whilst accepting this explanation, the parent should be asked when the symptoms were first apparent, and note should be made of the period of time that the child is absent. Once the 7/14 day isolation period has elapsed, the family can be contacted again and asked to return their child to school.

## **7. What if a child is living with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person?**

The government's most recent advice is that in cases where a child, young person or member of staff living with someone who is clinically vulnerable or pregnant can attend school. Those living with someone extremely vulnerable will need stringent social distancing in place or to stay at home.

## **8. What should schools do if a parent states that their child has underlying health issues and should not attend?**

If a child has an underlying health condition, this will almost certainly be known to the school, as the child may have been absent due to the condition previously, and the parents may have provided medical evidence. You may also have needed to put a health care plan in place to allow the child to access the curriculum.

If this is the case, if adjustments can be made at school to allow the child to attend, and to minimise the risks, this may encourage the parents to send the child to school. If not, it would seem reasonable to allow the child to remain at home, but to access work remotely. If the child cannot attend school, the absence may be marked as Y in registers. This will not affect attendance.

## **9. What should the school do if a family use public transport to travel to school?**

The government's guidance is not to use public transport. Some families have previously used public transport to get their child to school.

In these circumstances, if there are no safe alternatives, the child should remain at home and access work online. The government are expected to publish further guidance in relation to the use of public transport shortly.

If the child cannot attend school, the absence may be marked as Y in registers. This will not affect attendance.

## **10. What should a school do if pupils arrive late?**

Due to the government's revised advice about the use of public transport and avoiding crowds, schools may decide to stagger registration times and pick up/leave times. Some pupils may also arrive late to school due to transport issues. In such cases it would be advisable to keep registers open for longer periods to allow pupils to arrive and not to accrue absent marks. Schools may also opt to re-open registers.

## **11. When should schools delete a pupil from roll?**

Pupils may only be deleted from registers in accordance with pre-existing guidance and legislation. For the purposes of this guidance, most children that will be deleted from registers will be due to having moved out of the borough and who are not planning to return, or whose families have travelled abroad and are not planning to return to Haringey.

If we have confirmed that the family are no longer either in Haringey or in the UK, we may decide to delete that child from registers.

If we have confirmed that the child is registered at another school, we may delete that child from registers.

If we suspect that a family are no longer in Haringey, you have 20 consecutive school days to make checks to determine the family's whereabouts. A referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will allow further checks to be undertaken. If the child was absent prior to the lockdown, this period will also contribute to the 20-day period. If the family are confirmed to be out of the borough and are not planning to return, we may decide to delete the child from registers.

If, after all reasonable enquiries have been made and the family's whereabouts are not confirmed, the child may be deleted from roll after 20 consecutive days of absence. The period of lockdown is not to be counted as part of the 20-day period. As any absence accrued due to a family not being in the borough will be marked as authorised, schools may decide to keep a child on roll until further advice is provided.

If schools do decide to delete a pupil from registers, due to the family having moved elsewhere in the UK, the new local authority **must be informed** to allow another school place to be offered to the family.

## **12. Should schools keep pupils on roll for the October census?**

If the October 2020 census is to take place, schools may decide to delay deletion from roll of those pupils whose whereabouts are unconfirmed, and to keep pupils registered until the census has taken place. The child can then be deleted from registers unless whereabouts can be confirmed.

## **13. What should schools do about families that have multiple siblings at school when some are expected to attend, and some are not?**

Those children who are expected to attend school should do so. Pupils who are in year groups that are not expected to attend school should remain at home in accordance with current government guidance and registered accordingly.

## **14. At what point should schools make referrals to EWS?**

If we are unable to confirm the whereabouts of non-returners, we will refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) to make further checks. Once completed, they will advise whether to delete the pupil from registers.

If a parent or carer refuses to send their child to school due to anxieties, we will inform the EWS, but not as a referral. The EWS will contact the family to encourage them to return their child to school. Be aware that for some parents, this will not be immediately possible due to either perceived or actual anxieties.

**15. Will the Education Welfare Service use enforcement measures to ensure that children attend school?**

When schools open more widely to certain year groups, all pupils in those year groups will be expected to attend. The most recent guidance is that no-one with symptoms should attend school. Families should notify as normal if their child is unable to attend and address barriers; though parents will not be fined, and schools will not be held to account.

The Education Welfare Service have been advised to suspend the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) when schools were advised to close.

In line with the guidance, it would perhaps be unhelpful to return to a regime of using enforcement measures (FPNs and referrals to court) so soon after schools re-open and we are all working to encourage parents to return their children to attend school. Many parents will understandably be anxious, and the use of enforcement tools is unlikely to improve the situation; their use may well cause some parents to remove their children completely and elect to home educate, which may well not be in the child's best interests.

The EWS will continue to monitor the situation, and any further government guidance. The future use of enforcement tools will be reviewed and considered regularly.

**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020**