



Covid Addendum to Attendance Policy

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Attendance Expectations from the Autumn Term 2020

Aims and Scope

- 1 At Alderbrook School we recognise that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, may have had a huge impact on our students and their families. We are keen to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on our students' education, wellbeing and wider development and students' return to school is key to facilitating this process.
- 2 **School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term 2020.** 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. This means from the Autumn Term, the usual rules on school attendance and legal requirements will resume and 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
- 3 This addendum applies from the start of the autumn term 2020 until the end of the 2020/21 academic year. It sets out changes to our normal attendance policy, and should be read in conjunction with that policy. Unless covered here, our normal attendance policy continues to apply.
- 4 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 pupils.

Guidance and definitions

- 5 This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) [guidance](#) on school attendance during the 2020/21 academic year.
- 6 This addendum reflects the latest advice from Solihull Local Authority.
- 7 In section of this addendum, where we refer to 'close contact', this means:
 - Direct close contacts: face-to-face contact with an infected individual for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face-to-face conversation, or unprotected physical contact (skin-to-skin)
 - Proximity contacts: extended close contact (within 1 to 2 metres for more than 15 minutes) with an infected individual
 - Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car, with an infected person
- 8 This definition is from the DfE's [guidance on full reopening for schools](#) (see number 9 in 'the system of controls').

Where 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' applies

- 9 At Alderbrook School we will only accept 'non-attendance in relation to coronavirus' in circumstances where a pupil's travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England and/or the Department of Health and Social Care relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus

Pupil develops symptoms or lives with someone who does

- 10 Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day and every day that their child needs to self-isolate. The pupil will stay at home until they or the symptomatic person they live with receives their coronavirus test results, a copy of these results should be emailed as soon as possible to absence@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk
- 11 **If the pupil's test result is negative:** the pupil will return to school when they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus. They should continue to stay at home if they remain unwell (i.e. with a different illness).
- 12 **If the person the pupil lives with tests negative:** the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school
- 13 If a Pupil or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result Parents/carers must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible by emailing absence@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk
- 14 A pupil who tests positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and must only return to school when they no longer have symptoms (other than a cough or a loss of sense of smell or taste).
- 15 If a member of the pupil's household or a 'close contact' tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 14 days. The pupil must do this from when the member of their household first had symptoms, or the day the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result.
- 16 Parents/carers will be notified if their child/children have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive within school. Parents/carers will receive a separate email and text to inform them of the isolation period. Pupils should return following this isolation period unless they themselves have developed symptoms., In this case parents/carers should inform the school and follow the procedures detailed in section 3.1 of this addendum.
- 17 See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

Pupil has to quarantine after travel abroad

- 18 Parents/carers must notify the school if their child has to quarantine after travel to a country that is not on the government's [exemptions list](#).
- 19 The pupil must quarantine for 14 days on their arrival to the UK and return to school thereafter.
- 20 Please note that the 'travel period' will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless previously agreed with Alderbrook School and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, as per our usual policy.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

- 21 We recognise that there will still be a minority of students who may be advised by Public Health England or a specialist health professional to self-isolate or shield. In the event of each of these cases medical evidence may be requested, to enable us to authorise these absences.
- 22 At Alderbrook School we shall continue to follow government advice regarding these matters and it is therefore important parents note that students should only shield or self-isolate in the following circumstances:
- 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) (refer to sections 3.1-3.2 of this addendum).
 - 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. Please refer to 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 (see below).
 - 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](#).
 - In the case of quarantine after travel to a country not on the government's exempt list (see section 3.3 of this addendum)
- 23 It is expected, The parent/carers will notify the school if they are advised by the government to stay at home and will provide proof of their shielding letter by sending a scan/copy to absence@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk.
- 24 Pupils who have provided a shielding letter should stay at home until the shielding measures in the local area are paused. Once the shielding measures are lifted, we will contact the pupil's parent/carers to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep the pupils safe and ensure they can return to school safely. Where a pupil is unable to attend school due to the above circumstances, because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, students should engage with and access remote education.
- 25 Where children are not able to attend school for the above reasons, as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, this absence will not be penalised (refer to section 3.5 for the Local Authority temporary, Solihull Attendance (Penalty Notice) Code of Conduct). Where absences are non-COVID related, school's normal procedures will be applied.

Solihull Attendance (Penalty Notice) Code of Conduct

- 26 All legal action which was in process when schools closed in March has been terminated. This includes penalty notices and court action. Effectively all children will start the 2020/2021 academic year with a clean slate.

- 27 As directed by the DfE no penalty notices or prosecutions will be instigated for Covid 19 absence, past or future. More detail about future Covid 19 absence is set out in the Covid Absence Guidance notes.
- 28 The 5 month period between March 2020 and the July 2020 can be discounted when considering absence.

Recording attendance

- 29 We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:
- Present
 - Attending an approved off-site educational activity
 - Absent
 - Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances'
 - Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

- 30 For parents of students with significant risk factors who are concerned about their return to school, we request that an email be sent to, absence@alderbrook.solihull.sch.uk
- 31 This will allow a member of our Attendance/ Pastoral Team to get in contact to discuss concerns and measures that are being put in place to reduce the risk of transmission in school.
- 32 Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:
- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by a phone call from a member of our Attendance / Pastoral Team
 - Notify their social worker, where they have one.
- 33 We remind all parents that all pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

- 34 The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results
I	Illness	Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
I	Illness	Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown

