

Addendum: Attendance Guidance for the Academic Year 2020 to 2021 (updated January 13th 2021)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Government Guidance states that all pupils in all year groups will return to school full time at the beginning of the autumn term.
- 1.2 This addendum to the Attendance Policy is for use by all Tudor Grange Academies Trust schools during any period of national lockdown and during any subsequent arrangements of pupils returning to school once the prevalence of COVID 19 has decreased. It is to be used in conjunction with, and read alongside, the Attendance & Punctuality Policy.
- 1.3 We will continue to promote good attendance for pupils attending school and those attending remote learning sessions; it is the responsibility of the whole of the Tudor Grange Academies Trust community, thus enabling and encouraging all pupils to achieve excellence. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the school. Securing good attendance is a fundamental responsibility within our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our schools.
- 1.4 Absence from school or remote learning remains detrimental to a child's education. Any unexplained absence from school will be followed up in the normal manner as per the existing policy. This is in line with our safeguarding policy and practices.
- 1.5 The risk to children themselves becoming severely ill from COVID 19 is extremely low, there are however negative health impacts of not attending school or remote learning.
- 1.6 Schools are to reinforce that it is the parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school or remote learning sessions where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age.
- 1.7 It is the school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence.
- 1.8 Schools are able to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct, however The Trust would like to ensure we have exhausted every alternative option prior to issuing sanctions, including fixed penalty notices.

2. Prevention

- 2.1 Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.

3. How can schools within the Trust encourage pupils to attend and maintain good attendance?

- 3.1 Schools across the Trust will need to communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate).
- 3.2 Upon the reopening of schools, staff need to identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning to school or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-

engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic.

- 3.3 Schools are required to put measures in place for those families who will need additional time and support to secure pupils' regular attendance.
- 3.4 Staff will need to work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance.

4. Safeguarding

- 4.1 We will continue to apply all safeguarding responsibilities connected to pupil attendance at school as detailed in the policy.
- 4.2 Non-attendance of timetabled pupils should be followed up in the usual way and the reason for absence should be documented on Bromcom. For remote learning sessions, please see additional Trust guidance 'Recording attendance at virtual lessons' for further information.
- 4.3 Where every effort has been made to contact a family of a child that has failed to attend and there are safeguarding concerns, a home visit may be required. No staff member should enter the property, they should ensure that social distancing is adhered to. If further concerns are raised reporting should take place through the normal channels.
- 4.4 Please follow the Trust Staff Home Visits Policy when undertaking home visits.

5. Alternative Provision

- 5.1 Pupils in alternative provision (AP) settings (including pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools) will return to school full-time from the start of the autumn term.
- 5.2 To support this return, AP settings must comply with health and safety law which requires employers to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures.
- 5.3 Schools must take responsibility for all pupils in AP during any period of lockdown, liaising with the AP to identify who will undertake first day calling. The school must keep evidence of this.

6. Becoming unwell at school

- 6.1 If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow '[stay at home guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID19\) infection](#)', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 10 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.
- 6.2 If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with

appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

- 6.3 If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
- 6.4 PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the [‘Safe working in education childcare and children’s social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)’](#) guidance.
- 6.5 Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test & Trace.

7. ‘Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

- 7.1 No one with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason.
- 7.2 The DfE have added a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’. This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

Contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

Prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- 7.3 In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will **not** count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

8. Attendance codes

- 8.1 From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak, in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.
- 8.2 Both the DfE and Bromcom have released new information to support the tracking of Covid-19 related absences.
- 8.3 Bromcom have removed the codes relating to shielding that were introduced earlier in the year, and provided updated attendance codes to be used this academic year. The new codes

are given below; each maps back to the absence codes required for the census and absence statistic calculations.

Code	Mark Description
7	Pupils you have been informed are remaining at home due to potential contact with a case of coronavirus from outside of your educational setting
8	Pupils you have requested to isolate due to potential contact with a case of coronavirus from inside of your educational setting.
9	Pupil - Suspected Case of COVID-19
0	Pupil - Confirmed Case of COVID-19
X	Circumstances relating to COVID-19

8.4 Please use these above codes where applicable going forward. You should continue to use the I code for illness absences that are not related or suspected related to Covid.

8.5 **DAILY SUBMISSION TO THE DFE**

Each school will be required to make a daily submission of absence information to the DfE. Further information can be found at the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings?utm_source=a0930475-1c8c-41b7-bc40-078ffa9fd8cb&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

8.6 Schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak.

8.7 Example in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply:

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-1)

8.8 Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

9. **Summary points of attendance codes:**

9.1 If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

9.2 If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as **code I – illness**, as would usually be the case.

- 9.3 **Code 9** should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. **Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.**
- 9.4 If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms.
- 9.5 Pupils should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.
- 9.6 **Code 9** should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as **code 0 (illness)** until they are able to return to school.
- 9.7 If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test, **code X** should be used.
- 9.8 If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. **Code X** should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- 9.9 If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 10 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. **Code 7** should be used during this period.

10. Self-isolating

- 10.1 In all cases of self-isolation, **schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence** before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.
- 10.2 Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 10.3 The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 10 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Where this close contact has happened outside of school, **Code 7** should be used during this period.
- 10.4 In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. **Code 8** should be used for these pupils during this period.
- 10.5 Pupils may be required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine following a visit abroad.

Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, **code X** should be used in the register.

11. Shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19.

- 11.1 Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Shielding advice
- 11.2 If rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.

Those on the shielding list may also be asked to stay home in the event of a national lockdown.

Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as **code X**.

- 11.3 Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. **Code X** should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

12. Local and national lockdown scenarios

- 12.1 If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - **code X** - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.
- 12.2 Please refer to the guidance recording attendance at virtual lessons during a complete closure.
- 12.3 In the event of a national lockdown children may be asked to stay at home and engage in remote learning. In this scenario, children identified as vulnerable (those with a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, Looked After Children and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan) should attend in-school provision where possible. Provision is also available for children of keyworkers.
- 12.4 **During a full lockdown scenario, attendance in school for vulnerable and keyworker pupils should be recorded as follows:**
- As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they should not be marked as Code X if they are not in school (except if they are shielding, self-isolating or quarantining). Schools should encourage vulnerable children to attend but if the parent of a vulnerable child wishes their child to be absent from school, the parent should let the school know that the pupil will not be attending. DfE expects schools to grant such applications for leave given the exceptional circumstances. This should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable.
 - While parents and carers who are critical workers should keep children at home if they can, children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school if required. Schools should speak to parents to identify children of critical workers who need to go to school; those that do not should be recorded as Code X.

- where parents of critical workers only need their child to attend school part-time, schools should use Code X to record the sessions that the child is not expected to attend
- where the child of a critical worker is expected to attend a session and does not do so, the school should record the absence as Code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) unless another authorised absence code is more applicable
- as usual, Code X should be used if the child is self-isolating or quarantining because of coronavirus (COVID-19)

12.5 All pupils who are not expected to be in school should be marked as Code X. They are not attending because they are following public health advice

13. Remote education

13.1 If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), schools should offer remote learning immediately. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

14. Data collection

14.1 Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.