

The Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School

Attendance Addendum

September 2020

This document does not replace our existing **Attendance Policy** which can be found on our website but it outlines our attendance procedures for the period of school re-opening from September 2020 until matters are reviewed in January 2021

**Please refer to DfE guidance at the end of this document for information on vulnerability, shielding and quarantine requirements*

Context

In March 2020 when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, and 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 students 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 in September 2020. This means from that point, we welcome your child back into school and 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 and they are of compulsory school age. (Regular school attendance is 100%)
- 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

Who can't be in school?

Anyone with symptoms or where another member of the same household has symptoms should attend school for any reason. (Where this is the case, please refer to the NHS testing website and inform the school immediately). If someone in your household is extremely clinically vulnerable, the school will discuss individual cases with parents as necessary.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so 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. However:

- 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)
- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1st August 2020, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of students who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Read the [current advice on shielding](#)
- Where you and your child have been delayed in returning to the UK during the lock-down period or travelling abroad and have been told to remain at home, you should not attend school during the period of quarantine. **Please discuss such circumstances with the Head of Year and provide documentary evidence in support of absence; the school will consider the circumstances of the trip/time abroad to inform their decision to authorise absence or not.**

Current advice on [travel corridors](#).

- If rates of the disease rise in our 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 students 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. You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance](#)

[for children and young people](#). Please provide medical evidence to the school if your child is unable to attend full-time in September.

- Where a child is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we will offer access to education at home resources. We will monitor engagement with this activity to ensure learning is being accessed appropriately. This may also apply to some pupils with EHCP plans.
- Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

All other pupils must attend school.

Students of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies and where the absence has been **authorised** (for example, the student has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, has been told to quarantine, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

We understand that some students, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. This may include students who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. This may also include some pupils with EHCP plans.

If parents of students with significant risk factors are concerned, please discuss your concerns with us so that we can understand your situation and reassure you of the measures we have in place to reduce the risk in school. The school may contact the SEND and School Nursing Teams for advice and support, and we may require medical verification or other relevant documentation in order to assess risk.

Punctuality

Student's start and finish times will be staggered to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Please ensure your child arrives on time and leaves the school site swiftly in order to minimise disruption in line with the school's Covid risk management. Please contact the school in advance if you are experiencing difficulties. *If lateness persists, the*

*school will discuss this with you and agree some support measures; if matters do not improve, the lateness will **not be authorised** and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority **School Attendance Service**, who may invite you to agree a Parenting Contract.*

Management of non-attendance

Families should notify the school as normal on each day of absence.

Where a child is not regularly attending the school, we will want to discuss this with you to understand what the difficulties are and agree with you some supportive measures to improve matters as early as possible. We will follow our normal absence procedures to establish the reasons for absence (please refer to our main Attendance Policy found on our website). Where our efforts do not result in an improvement in attendance or time keeping, we will refer to the local authority School Attendance Service for additional support, advice and ultimately enforcement.

Referrals to the Local Authority

- All unauthorised absence, including significant lateness is reported to the Local Authority School Attendance Service to offer additional advice and support to parents as necessary. Where unauthorised absence is frequent and or persistent, sanctions will be imposed to include warnings, penalty notices, prosecution in the magistrate's court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.
- Where a child or family is away from home including abroad, and unable to return home, parents are expected to provide the school with detailed information as to their whereabouts, reasons for travel and estimated return dates and we will do our best to support you. Where the school is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence will not be authorised, and this could result in Fixed Penalty Fine (please refer to our main Attendance Policy). Please be aware that leave of absence is only granted in **exceptional circumstances** at the discretion of the Headteacher and in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

- Where the school is unable to contact a child/family over a 3-day period, they will contact the School Attendance Service to carry out enquiries to try to locate them. A home visit will also be undertaken.
- Where the school and the Attendance Service have failed to locate the child/family within 10 days, the child will be referred to the **LA Children Missing Education Officer** (CME officer) who will undertake additional checks with other agencies to locate them, including consultation with social care, the police, health and housing. Where these enquiries do not lead to confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the matter will remain open to that service who will widen their enquiries. In these circumstances, the school cannot guarantee to keep a school place open for your child.

Is attendance compulsory?

Yes, however, anyone who displays symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can and should get a test. ([Arrange to have a test](#)). Tests can be booked online through the NHS testing and tracing for coronavirus website or ordered by telephone via NHS 119 for those without access to the internet.

Parents must inform school immediately of the results of a test:

- if someone tests positive, they should follow the 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection' and must continue to self-isolate for at least 7 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste.

This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with Ealing Social Care in line with our Child Protection Procedures.

*Link to DfE Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors>