

Cabot Learning Federation

COVID-19 Attendance Position Statement – September 2020

(DfE information correct as at 25 August 2020)

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1. This document has been developed to reflect changes in Cabot Learning Federation schools' practice as a result of the COVID -19 outbreak. It replaces previous CLF guidance documents on recording attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak.
2. This document should be read in line with the DfE document School attendance: main guidance (August 2020)¹.

Attendance Expectations

3. The government expects all pupils of compulsory school age (5-16 years) to attend school again from the start of the autumn term 2020. Pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:
 - parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
 - schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
 - the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Absence Coding

4. Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to COVID-19².

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

5. A new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ has been created and 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 against the law or Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) advice.
6. 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, if a pupil cannot attend due to COVID-19, as set out below, the missed sessions will **not** count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes. Pupils not attending a session for any of the reasons outlined in a-e below will be recorded using code X.

a) a pupil is required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19;

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to COVID-19, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- 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.
- Code X 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.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms.
- They 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.
- Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

To support decision making, reference should be made to relevant government guidance available [here](#)³.

b) a pupil is required to self-isolate as a member of their household has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19;

- The household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- 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.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
- In all cases of self-isolation, the school will ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. However, evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence will not be requested before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

To support decision making, reference should be made to relevant government guidance available [here](#).

c) a pupil is required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19;

- The [NHS test and trace](#)⁴ guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- In the event of a confirmed 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 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious.
- Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

To support decision making, reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#).

d) a pupil is required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine;

- 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.

To support decision making, reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#)⁵.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works#people-who-have-had-close-contact-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk>

e) a pupil is clinically extremely vulnerable (this is only applicable in a future local lockdown scenario)

- 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.
- If in future, 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.
- 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.
- The school will 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 will not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to the school.

To support decision making, reference should be made to the relevant government guidance available [here](#)⁶.

7. In addition to absence due to COVID-19, there are other reasons why pupils may not be able to attend school, such as illness unrelated to COVID-19. If a pupil is too ill to attend school, evidence may be required in line with the school's usual processes and expectations – if so, the parent/carer will be notified of this expectation.

Home/School Communication

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

We will encourage parents who have concerns about their child returning to school, because they consider they may have other risk factors, to share their concerns with the school.

9. We ask that any pupils, parents and carers with concerns about a pupil's return to school due to the risk of COVID-19 contact us so that we can listen to their concerns and explain the measures we are putting

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

in place to reduce the risk in school in line with government guidance, and where possible will make any further reasonable adjustments if needed. We will do our utmost to help our pupils return to learning in school and to enjoy being with their friends again.

10. We understand that some pupils, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about pupils returning to school due to other reasons. We will encourage pupils, parents and carers who have concerns for any reason to share their concerns with the school too. We will do our utmost to help.

Staggered Start Times

11. Arrival and collection at the start and end of the school day may be staggered to minimise crossover between pupils and families where possible. We will share this information with families as needed.

Holidays in Term Time

12. The government has not relaxed the rules on term time holidays from September. [DfE guidance for parents \(dated 21 August 2020\)](#)⁷ states:

“As usual, you should plan your holidays within school and college holidays. Avoid seeking permission to take your children out of school during term time.”

Should a parent need to make a request for any **exceptional** leave of absence, they should complete the request in the usual way.

Attendance and absence processes

13. We will continue to follow current CLF, Local Authority and Government attendance guidance.
14. We will recommence our usual registration processes and will undertake first day calling when a pupil does not arrive at school and we have not been informed of their absence by a parent or carer.
15. We will record absences as authorised or unauthorised, depending on the circumstances of the absence and in line with government guidance.
16. We will work with pupils, parents and carers to understand the reasons why a pupil may not be attending school, and do all they can to support pupils and parents to feel assured about the pupil’s return to school. The school will only request Penalty Notices or other legal action where they consider

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term#school-and-college-attendance>

this to be appropriate and will seek advice from the Local Authority where needed. Parents will be warned about any sanctions in advance and wherever possible reasonable attempts will be made to resolve the matter without resorting to fining (with the exception of some unauthorised term time holiday absence, where advance warning of a sanction is not always possible).

17. We will follow up on any pupils who do not arrive at school and their whereabouts is not known. We will follow the [CLF CME & Pupil Tracking Guidance \(Sept 2020\)](#)
18. Where necessary, we will seek internal advice on attendance matters from Fiona Lightwood CLF Attendance Manager fiona.lightwood@clf.uk and we will seek safeguarding advice from Steve Bane CLF Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer steve.bane@clf.uk.
19. We will also seek external advice from the Local Authority and other agencies where appropriate.

Further Key Information

Local lockdown

20. If rates of the disease rise locally, the school may need to prevent some pupils from attending. The school will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.
21. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to COVID-19' - code X – will be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote Education

22. If a pupil is not attending the school due to circumstances related to COVID-19, the school will offer them access to remote education (this may be online or via other means). The school will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity.