

## Attendance policy addendum

### Education Guidance

#### Context

On 20th March 2020, as a result of Covid-19 and the Government's resulting social distancing strategy, schools closed to all learners except those of critical workers, those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those learners categorised as vulnerable.

As such, although Northern Ambition Academy Trust schools have never fully closed, there are many learners who have not been in school for a protracted period of time. We have committed to the wider opening of our schools based on the condition that there will be sound national medical and scientific evidence that it is safe to do so. 'Wider Opening' means a resumption of our core business of education, rather than the current limited arrangements. We want our children back in school so that we can support them more effectively from an academic, social and welfare perspective.

This addendum supports our school's attendance policy in clearly outlining the processes that will be followed in recording attendance, in line with the Government's guidance, as well as ensuring school attendance is maximised for those groups expected to be in school.

This addendum applies from w/c 8 June 2020 for schools. It will be in operation until further notice and will be reviewed in line with the Government's reviews of legislation and guidance in the coming weeks and months. There may be circumstances where it is necessary for the school to close to some or all groups of pupils, i.e. where we are instructed to close by the Local Authority or the Trust in the event of a localised Coronavirus outbreak. In the event of this happening, the provisions of this addendum will be suspended in part or whole for the duration of the school closure.

#### Our Guiding Principles

1. We will follow Government guidance on the wider opening of our school; however, we have made Trust based decisions about the extent of provision that can be offered to families. This is to maintain the health and safety of our children and staff and is a function of the school building(s) as well as the resources available to us.
2. We will continue to provide educational provision for the families of key workers, children with EHCPs and those identified as vulnerable.
3. We will prioritise educational provision in this order: vulnerable pupils and children with EHCPs; children of key workers; other children. This will apply where the head teacher identifies a high risk of limited capacity in school, this may be due to staff absence or where the anticipated number of children arriving in school is too high to maintain a safe adult to child ratio. Government guidance states that settings have the flexibility to focus first on continuing to provide places for priority groups and then to other children.
4. We will follow existing Government guidance on attendance and absence and the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020. We will not penalise parents if their child does not attend school.
5. We will follow the Government's guidance in recording and reporting on attendance as our

schools open their doors to more pupils. This addendum will be reviewed following any Government review of the guidance (the next review date will be before 1 July 2020).

This addendum relates to recording and reporting on the attendance and absence of five groups of pupils:

1. Children of key workers
2. Vulnerable children
3. Children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
4. Other children, i.e. those in year 1 and 6 in primary schools,

*NB These groups are not mutually exclusive.*

The Government guidance issued on 28 May 2020 stated that from the point at which they open to wider groups of pupils schools need to do the following:

- Take an attendance register for all pupils.
- Use the codes suggested in the guidance to record attendance and absence in the attendance register.
- Submit daily attendance figures using the educational setting status form by midday every day.

We anticipate that a significant minority of pupils of those who can return to school in the w/c 1st June will not do so. In these circumstances we are sympathetic to parents' views and the decision they have made with regard to their child or children returning to school.

Efforts should be made by teaching and pastoral staff to encourage children to return to school, focused on vulnerable children and those with EHCPs.

In the interim, work will continue to be provided for children to undertake at home, in line with the schools' plans for providing remote learning for all pupils.

#### Recording attendance in temporary staffing groups

Pupils in our school will be taught in class sizes of no more than 15, in line with Government guidance; in practice, the size of the group or 'bubbles' are likely to be smaller than 15. Our school will follow all relevant guidance for maintaining the safety of pupils in school and will review and adapt provision should the guidance change.

We will adapt our school registers as needed to enable staff to record attendance accurately and efficiently, this may include creating new groupings for the pupils expected to attend. We will also adapt our reporting facility in Bromcom, as necessary, to enable school leaders to accurately track and monitor the attendance and absence of pupils. This, in turn, will support the school in providing information to its senior leadership team, the DfE, the Trust and the LA.

There is no expectation that attendance or absence figures will be used for accountability purposes for the duration of the provisions of this addendum, in line with the Government's statement.

The Government has published guidance for schools and other educational settings in providing advice for pupils, students, staff and parents about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. The following link will take you to that advice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

This includes advice on:

- how to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections - including COVID-19;
- what to do if someone confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 has been in a school or other educational setting;
- what advice to give to individuals who have travelled from [specified countries or areas](#) within the last 14 days (including school trips)

### **Attendance Recording**

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as normally would happen, the pupil should be recorded as absent in the attendance register and the school will authorise the absence.

**Code I (Illness)** should be used in this instance:

Where a pupil is in self-isolation and the school has medical evidence to show that this is necessary, in accordance with latest information and advice from Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England, the pupil should be recorded as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances in the attendance register. The school can send work home for the child to complete, as with other medical cases.

**Code Y (Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances)** should be used in this instance:

It is understood that some families may choose to self-isolate as a protective factor. Head Teachers will need to make an informed decision based upon the individual circumstance as they would usually do when a parent decides not to send their child into school; in line with their attendance policy. Parents must be advised that where they are not sending their child to school to 'self-isolate' they should not be seen in other public places. Where there is no medical evidence of the need to self-isolate, and schools do not wish to agree exceptional circumstances, schools should record as an unauthorised absence.

**Code O (Unauthorised absence)**: should be used in this instance.

Where pupils are not eligible to attend, for example their year group is not invited into school and they are also not in a priority group (key worker and vulnerable)

**Code X (not required to be in school)** should be used in this instance

Where children are eligible to attend a session but do not attend and are not ill, shielding, self isolating or have an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school.

**Code C (leave of absence authorised by the school)** should be used in this instance

