



# Attendance Policy

## Phoenix Community Primary School

Author: Diane Davis (Attendance Officer)

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Parental Responsibility</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Legislation and Guidance</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Roles and Responsibility</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Children Missing Education</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Lateness</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Authorising Absence</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Strategies for promoting attendance</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Kent School Referral Pathway</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b><i>Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b><i>1. Aims and scope</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b><i>2. Guidance and definitions</i></b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b><i>3. Pupils eligible to attend school during national lockdown</i></b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b><i>4. Where ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus’ applies</i></b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b><i>5. Remote learning provision</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>6. Recording attendance of all pupils</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>7. Following up on absence</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>8. Monitoring arrangements</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><i>Appendix 1: pupil absence codes</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>

## Introduction

Phoenix Community Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Phoenix Community Primary School.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child is educated and arrives at school on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Your child does not need to be absent from school if they have been prescribed medicine from their doctor which they need to take during school hours. Please bring the medicine to the school office and we will arrange for the medication to be given at the requested time.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. All pupils that arrive late need to report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Roles and Responsibility

### The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- If no reason for absence has been provided, the attendance officer will ensure that parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reason for absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – the class teacher to monitor and notify Diane Davis of concerns. Diane Davis to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

## Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.

- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### Lateness

At Phoenix Community Primary School the register is taken at 8.50am and 1pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9am and 1.10pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

### Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

### Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some very rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

### Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with [Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct](#) effective from June 2020.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one **per parent, per child**)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Or where the school has evidence that there are other pressing personal issues for a family that would warrant a short break from school.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

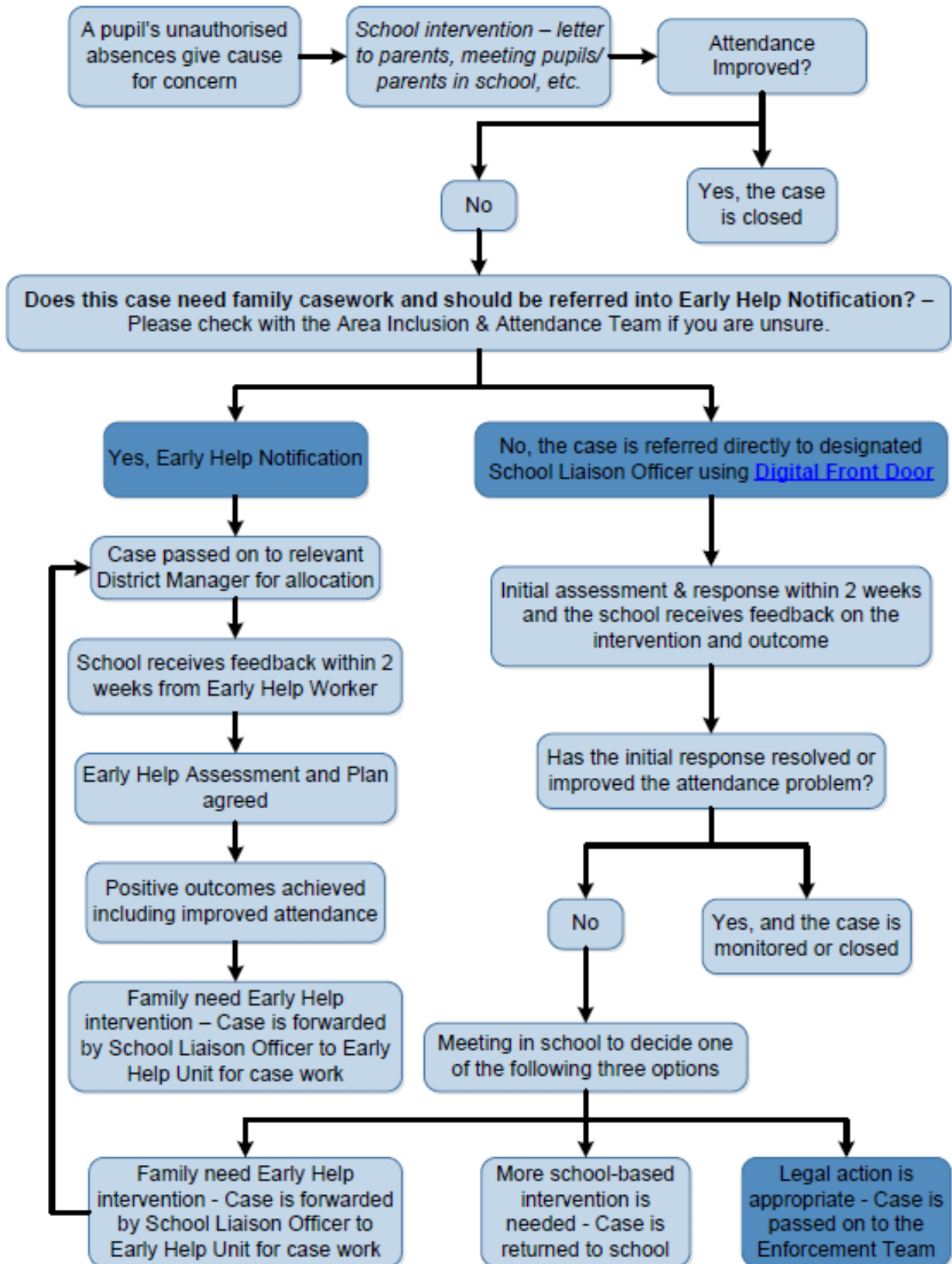
Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes attendance in a number of ways:

- Conveys a clear message and vision for attendance to all members of the school community, including parents and pupils, with clear communication including newsletters, assemblies, emails and social media.
- Clear messaging about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement and Pupil Premium strategy.
- Promote attendance through class and individual rewards, including as part of the weekly celebration assembly, including for example a punctuality raffle and class attendance trophy.
- Attendance is highlighted clearly to parents in a child’s school report.

## Kent School Referral Pathway





# Attendance policy: coronavirus addendum

Phoenix Community Primary School



## 1. Aims and scope

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Allowing and encouraging vulnerable children to access full-time education in school
- Allowing the children of critical workers to access full-time education in school if parents/carers cannot keep them at home
- Following up on absence among any pupils who we expect to attend school

This addendum applies during the national lockdown currently in place. 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.

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.

## 2. Guidance and definitions

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's (DfE's) [guidance](#) on restricting attendance during the national lockdown, and its [addendum](#) to the school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year.

In section 4.3 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

This definition is from the DfE's [guidance on restricting attendance during the national lockdown \(linked above, page 22\)](#).

## 3. Pupils eligible to attend school during national lockdown

### 3.1 Vulnerable children

We expect all vulnerable children to attend school.

The definition of vulnerable children includes those who:

- Are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including:
  - Looked-after children
  - Children with a child in need plan
  - Children with a child protection plan
- Have an education, health and care (EHC) plan

Other groups that may be identified as vulnerable are:

- On the edge of receiving support from children's social care services or in the process of being referred
- Adopted or on a special guardianship order
- Young carers
- Facing difficulty engaging with remote education at home (for example, due to a lack of devices or quiet space to study)
- In need of support for their mental health

Parents/carers must inform the headteacher if their child:

- Falls into one of the categories above (and is therefore expected to attend school) but parents/carers wish for their child to learn from home
- Has had a change in circumstances, which means their child now falls into one of the categories above
- Does not fit into one of the categories above but parents/carers have concerns that their child is otherwise vulnerable

### 3.2 Children of critical workers

Parents/carers who are critical workers **should keep their child at home if they can**. If this is not possible, children of critical workers are able to attend school.

Critical workers are those whose work is critical to the coronavirus and EU transition responses, including parents/carers who work in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare (including social workers)
- Key public services (including the justice system, religious staff, charities delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting)
- Local and national government who are involved in delivering the coronavirus response, EU transition or essential public services
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security

- Transport and border (including transport systems through which supply chains pass, and the construction and operational support of critical transport and border infrastructure through which supply chains pass)
- Utilities, communication and financial services

A more detailed list of critical workers is available on the government website [here](#).

Parents/carers that qualify must notify the school if they wish for their child to attend, by completing the [online form for critical workers](#) or emailing [officemanager@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk](mailto:officemanager@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk)

We reserve the right to request evidence from parents/carers of their job role. This could be an ID badge, a letter provided by your employer which confirms your critical worker status, a payslip or contract.

## 4. Where 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus' applies

For the 2020/21 academic year, there is a new category of non-attendance to capture circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to COVID-19: 'Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus'.

This applies 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 or transmission of coronavirus

For example:

### 4.1 Pupil is not eligible to attend school and must stay at home

Pupils that do not fit into an eligible group (see section 3) must follow public health advice and not come into school.

### 4.2 Pupil due to attend school develops symptoms or lives with someone who develops symptoms

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first 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 result.

**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 (e.g. with a different illness).

**If the symptomatic person the pupil lives with tests negative:** the pupil will stop self-isolating and return to school.

### 4.3 Pupil due to attend school or a 'close contact' of theirs receives a positive test result

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school about the positive test result as soon as possible by calling on 01233 622510 or emailing [office@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk) or [outofhours@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk](mailto:outofhours@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk)

Pupils who test positive must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms (i.e. the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days), 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).

If a member of the pupil's household tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of the household member's symptoms (as above, the isolation period includes the day the symptoms started and the next 10 full days).

If a 'close contact' of the pupil tests positive, the pupil must self-isolate for 10 days from the day after the pupil last met with the 'close contact' who received the positive result (i.e. the isolation period includes the date of the last contact and the next 10 full days).

See the definition for 'close contact' in section 2 of this addendum.

#### 4.4 Pupil due to attend school is required to shield

Shielding is in place during the national lockdown. Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not attend school.

## 5. Remote learning provision

The school will provide access to remote education for pupils not attending school for the scenarios included in the section above, or other examples that come under the category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus'.

- Our approach and expectations regarding remote education are set out in our [Remote Learning Policy](#) which can be found on the school website:
- We will keep a record of, and monitor, pupil engagement with remote learning, but we will not track this information in the attendance register

## 6. Recording attendance of all pupils

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'
- Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus

See appendix 1 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them.

## 7. Following up on absence

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 making a telephone call on the first day of absence
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

Parents will not be penalised if their child does not attend school during this period.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum every 2 months during term time by Chris Johnson, Headteacher. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

## Appendix 1: pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance](#) on restricting attendance during the national lockdown, and its [addendum](#) to the school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year.

If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is not eligible to attend school and will be learning from home or is a child of a critical worker that is choosing to learn from home
<b>C</b>	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Vulnerable pupil is eligible for a place in school but their parent/carer wants them to learn from home
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil due to attend school has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who has symptoms, and are waiting for their test results
<b>I</b>	Illness	Pupil due to attend school remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)
<b>I</b>	Illness	Pupil due to attend school has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil due to attend school has to self-isolate because someone they live with tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil due to attend school has to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)	Pupil is required to shield