



### **Attendance Policy Addendum -May 2020- COVID 19**

Advice for the education sector is being updated with great regularity. Therefore, the schools' position on attendance will undoubtedly evolve in line with updated guidelines and as more year groups are invited back to attend school.

#### **Definition of vulnerable children:**

During the coronavirus outbreak vulnerable children and young people are defined as those who:

- are assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, including children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or who are a looked-after child
- have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and it is determined, following a risk assessment, that their needs can be met as safely or more safely in the educational environment; or
- have been assessed as otherwise vulnerable by education providers or local authorities (including children's social care services), and who are therefore in need of continued education provision - this might include children and young people on the edge of receiving support from children's social care services, adopted children, those at risk of becoming NEET ('not in employment, education or training'), those living in temporary accommodation, those who are young carers, and others at the provider and local authority discretion

#### **Our Approach:**

1.1. No child with symptoms should attend a setting for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the [guidance on shielding](#), they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

1.2. The school will encourage children and young people in priority groups (such as children of critical workers) to attend, unless they are self-isolating or there are other reasons for absence (such as shielding due to health conditions).

1.3. Vulnerable children's attendance is expected, where it is appropriate for them (i.e. where there are no shielding concerns for the child or their household, and/or following a risk assessment for children with an EHC plan), so that they can gain the educational and wellbeing benefits of attending. Vulnerable children and young people – regardless of year group – that have not been attending in the recent period are expected to return to school where this would now be appropriate for them to do so. The attendance expectations across the different groups of vulnerable children and young people is as follows:

- for vulnerable children, who have a social worker, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable. If this is the case, school will work closely with the social worker who will be notified of their absence

- for vulnerable children who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined, following risk assessment that their needs can be as safely or more safely met in school
- for vulnerable children who are deemed otherwise vulnerable, at the school, attendance is expected unless the child/household is shielding or clinically vulnerable

1.4. The school will strongly encourage eligible children, including priority groups, to attend school, unless they are self-isolating or they are clinically vulnerable.

1.5. The school will reiterate the expectations to families that no one with symptoms should attend school, for any reason. If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable, children should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

1.6. Families should notify the school as normal if their child is unable to attend so that staff can explore the reason with them and address barriers together. **Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.** Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the law has been relaxed, so that the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

1.7. For those pupils eligible to attend, the school will address absence by sensitively exploring parents' and pupils' concerns and what is preventing attendance and work with them to re-engage pupils where appropriate. School will be required to follow up with any parent or carer whose child has been expected to attend and doesn't.

1.8. School will work together with local authorities and other relevant partners to support parents and children in their return to regular attendance. When working to improve attendance, the school will consider the individual circumstances of each child and parent in order to ensure that they are appropriate to the child's needs.

1.9. The school will focus support particularly on pupils who were previously persistently absent or at risk of being so.

### **Attendance and Safeguarding:**

2.1. The school will continue to inform social workers where children with a social worker do not attend.

2.2 There is an expectation that vulnerable children and young people will continue to attend school, where it is appropriate for them to do so. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an educational setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker (where appropriate) and school will explore the reasons for this, directly with the parent. Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting the virus, the school and/or social worker will talk through these concerns with the parent following the advice set out by [Public Health England](#). The school will notify the child's social worker (where relevant) where the child does not attend school.

2.3. The designated safeguarding leads will keep under review their lists of vulnerable children and young people who should be attending provision. The school will share their lists of vulnerable children who should be attending provision with their local authority. The school will work together

with social care to ensure adequate and appropriate arrangements are in place to keep in touch with vulnerable children (whether they are attending provision, or not attending for an agreed or non-agreed reason), such as by letter, phone or visit.

2.4. To support this, school will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

2.5. The school continues to have a duty and responsibility to safeguard all its pupils, even those not identified as belonging to a 'key worker family' or those identified as 'vulnerable' thereby not in direct attendance at the premises. Tis policy addendum should be read alongside the Safeguarding policy (May addendum)

### **Registration of Attendance:**

3.1. From 1<sup>st</sup> June, the school will be required to continue to submit the Educational Setting Status form, via the online portal, reporting whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school.

3.2. To ensure adequate social distancing for parents when dropping off pupils in the mornings, the school has implemented staggered drop off times. Consequently, previous registration closure times have been temporarily amended **to twenty minutes past the allocated drop off times.**