



School attendance addendum

Purpose of this document

This document is an addendum to the non-statutory [school attendance: guidance for schools](#). It replaces temporary guidance documents on recording attendance during the outbreak. For ease of reference, it explains and illustrates changes made to regulations-governing school attendance registers in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) from 24 August 2020 for use in the 2020 to 2021 academic year. It should be read in conjunction with the wider guidance document which gives advice on other usual attendance duties and processes that remain in force.

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 WHMAT 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 which are, in effect, organised as childcare for key workers and vulnerable pupils. 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 the 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 31st August 2020. 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 WHMAT 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.



Attendance expectations

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 - *For the first half term, schools will be unable to use 'FAST-track to Attendance' after step one (which is the Early Help stage) and will not be able to refer children to the Education Legal Intervention Team for unauthorised leave in term time. Please refer to the school website for further guidance and support.*

New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure the school records this accurately and consistently, changes have been made to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category will 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:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

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, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools will return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X



- the school will continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak



Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).

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 coronavirus (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. The school will 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 will 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.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, 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 will only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

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. The school will not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.



Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [NHS test and trace](#) guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The [NHS test and trace](#) 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 coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (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 will be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

View guidance on [how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#).

As usual, 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 quarantine⁵. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X will be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

View [guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](#).

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 will 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 school.

Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools 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. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X – will be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the school will be able to immediately offer access to remote education. The school will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.

1. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#) ↵
2. [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#) ↵
3. And their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there. ↵
4. Code X is not counted as an absence in the school census. ↵
5. [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, International Travel\) \(England\) Regulations 2020](#) ↵