

School Attendance Information - Returning to school in September 2020

On 2 July 2020 the government announced that all students will be expected to return to school from September 2020 and that school attendance will again be mandatory for all students of compulsory school age. In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, the government made it clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Schools were then closed to all but a specific group of students; those of key workers and vulnerable children. Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We know that children have missed being with their friends and the wider social aspects of school. Missing out on more time in the classroom risks students falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in school.

School attendance is therefore compulsory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

This means from September 2020, the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to send their child to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability of local authorities to use legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court.

In addition, this is not the time to take your child out of school for a family holiday or other term time leave. No leave will be authorised by the Principal after so much enforced absence from school. The more your child is in school, the more they will catch up. Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members.

We understand that some students, parents and households may be reluctant or anxious about students returning. This may include:

- students who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary;
- students living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable
- those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds.

If you fall into any of these categories and have any concerns about your child's return to school, please contact the Academy so that we can listen to your concerns and explain the measures we are putting in place to reduce the risk in school.

We are looking forward to welcoming all of our students back to school but safety is our highest priority. Specific Risk Assessments are in place and are under continuous review. Students will be

kept in year group 'bubbles' for their entire school day (lessons, break times and lunch times). Year groups will be taught in zones and will have designated eating and outdoor spaces. This means they will not come into contact with students from a different year group throughout the time that they are in the Academy. A one way system has been set up for movement around the building and 2m markers are in place on the floors throughout to enable social distancing. You have received separate guidance surrounding the staggered start to the school year. We will continue to follow Public Health England and government guidance along with any guidance at a local level. We hope this will provide some reassurance and give parents and carers the confidence to support their child's return to school.

What if a child, young person, or member of their household has been shielding due to being clinically extremely vulnerable?

Shielding advice for all adults, children and young people will pause on 1 August, as long as there is a continued decline in the transmission rate of COVID-19. This means students who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. You can read the current advice on shielding here:

<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>

Self-isolating due to symptoms of COVID-19

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If a student has any of these COVID-19 symptoms they must not come to school. If anyone in their household has any of these symptoms, the student must not come to school. You can read the current advice on self-isolating here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

This guidance states that the student must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have COVID-19

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>).

First aid and illness at school

First Aid provision will remain in place at school. A qualified first aider will be on site at all times. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available for first aid use. As usual, if your child becomes unwell while at school, they will be taken to an isolated area and you will be called to collect them. If your child has symptoms of COVID-19 your household will be advised to follow the government's 'stay at home guidance', as above.

Please tell the school if your child is unable to attend for any reason. Please follow the Academy's usual absence procedures if your child cannot attend school due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, so that we know that they are safe. If the Academy does not hear from you we will follow our first day absence procedures.

Travel and transport to school

Government guidance on returning to school in September states that, where possible, students are encouraged to avoid public transport, particularly at peak times, and to walk or cycle to school. It also says that, where a student relies on public transport to get to school, and cannot walk or cycle, the government's safer travel guidance for passengers will apply. The full guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

The section on public transport states that, by law, passengers must wear a face covering on public transport. However, there are some people who do not have to wear face coverings. The guidance explains this in more detail. Passengers should also maintain a 2 metre distance from others who are not in their household, where this is possible. Passengers should also ensure good respiratory hygiene by using the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach; avoid touching their face; minimise the surfaces they touch and wash or sanitise hands thoroughly before and after travelling.

Start and end of day

Staggered entry and exit times will be in place at the start and end of the school day to ensure the year group 'bubbles' do not mix. The Academy will share this information with you nearer the time.

Further guidance

Further guidance from the Government is available here:

<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>

NHS UK

NHS UK has the latest advice and general information about COVID-19. For more information visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

NHS 111

To check your symptoms, please visit: <https://111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19/> or call 111 to speak to an operator.