

## **Covid-19 Attendance Policy Addendum 2 (September 2020)**

This addendum applies until further notice and supersedes all previous addendums.

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made it clear that no parents/carers would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents/carers duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Following the Government guidance released on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> July (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>), attendance at Airedale Academy will once again become **mandatory** from Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. Parents/carers should note however that:

- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19). Where a period of self-isolation ends, Airedale Academy would then expect the student to return to school unless medical evidence suggests otherwise.
- shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- if rates of the disease rise in the local area, children (or family members) from the area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent (see below).
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment).

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, Airedale Academy will immediately offer them access to remote education. It is our expectation that any pupil working remotely accesses this provision in its entirety as it is designed to replicate a traditional school day.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence **will not** be penalised.

Airedale Academy appreciates the anxiety returning to school could cause for many students and their families. We are committed to working with our families to ensure all students can return to school safely in September. Where families feel there may be difficulties, we ask they contact the academy to discuss what support can be put in place to enable students to return.

From September 2020, regular attendance codes will be used to record school attendance. Absence from school can be authorised in the following cases (It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised):

- Sickness (please inform the academy before 9am on **EACH day** of sickness related absence);
- Medical appointments – please email evidence to [attendance@airedaleacademy.com](mailto:attendance@airedaleacademy.com) , e.g. photograph of appointment card/letter;
- Days of religious observance;
- Exceptional family circumstances;
- By permission of the Principal;

Parents/carers should be encouraged to avoid booking family holidays during term time. The Principal's permission now needs to be given prior to a 'Family Holiday' being taken by a student at Airedale Academy and leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers should write to the Principal prior to making any bookings. Holidays should not be taken during periods of formal examinations. Since September 2013, schools can only authorise a holiday in exceptional circumstances. Any parents/carers/guardians who have a holiday request denied and still take their child(ren) out of Airedale Academy face a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority;

For students whose attendance drops below 95%, the school reserves the right to mark any future absences as unauthorised (unless medical evidence is received). A request for a fixed penalty notice (fine) could then be requested from Wakefield Council for any student with 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 days).

In order to define attendance and absence correctly during this period, the follow extra-ordinary codes will be used on registers:

- All Year groups will be coded on registers as either / (present), **X** (not attending in circumstances related to Covid-19), **0** (EHCP but deemed not appropriate to attend), **I** (non-Covid illness), **M** (Medical), **C** (authorised absence), **O** (unauthorised absence).
- Any students in Years 7-11 who hold an EHCP but will not be attending following a risk assessment will be coded **O**.

It is envisaged that this policy will be in place until Government guidance indicates that the academy can be reopened to all year groups. A further update, if necessary, will follow in due course.