



## **Minerva Learning Trust**

### **COVID-19 Attendance Policy**

Effective from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Version 6  
6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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## Version Control

Version 6 was updated on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which reflects:

- Coding updates as no unauthorised absence codes to be used during Lockdown 3 which started on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Version 5 was updated on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 as England was placed into Tier 5 from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which reflects:

- School to be open to students for face to face provision for those whose parents or carers are critical keyworkers and students who are classed as vulnerable.
- All other students to receive remote learning.

Version 4 was updated on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to reflect Government guidance on daily data submission to Department for Education

Version 3 was updated on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to reflect:

- Parent's duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly.
- Schools responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- Updated guidance on shielding and protecting people who are extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 from 1 August 2020
- New guidance for educational and childcare settings for local lockdowns
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices.

Version 2 was updated on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 to reflect additional SIMs codes and the withdrawal of sharing attendance data with the LA from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## 1. Scope and definitions

This policy applies during the period of partial school closure due to COVID -19 and reflects latest updated advice from the Government (28<sup>th</sup> May 2020), Sheffield Local Authority and Minerva Learning Trust on recording and reporting attendance for monitoring and safeguarding reasons as schools plan for the wider reopening during the Summer Term effective from 1<sup>st</sup> June. The Government have based wider reopening plans on meeting the 'Government 5 Tests'.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May – The Director of Public Health – Sheffield City Council Greg Fell has announced that they are not confident that in terms of 'Test and Trace' that this has not been fully embedded and so they are directing schools to aim for a wider reopening on 15<sup>th</sup> June. Although secondary schools were not planning for a wider reopening until 15<sup>th</sup> June it does affect primary colleagues and may impact on secondary siblings or transition work.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July – The Department of Education published guidance for full opening for schools including sixth form which stated school attendance from September 2020 will be mandatory.

Also on 2<sup>nd</sup> July - The Department of Education also published guidance for local lockdowns which requests educational and early year's settings to remain open only for students who are vulnerable and children or critical workers.

On 14<sup>th</sup> July – Public Health England updated guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19 which states the government will no longer be advising them to shield.

On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 Government stated that from 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 its schools responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence.

On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Government stated that from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 England will be placed into Tier 5 to reduce the spread of COVID-19, to protect the NHS and save lives. As of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, schools will only be open to students who parents or carers are critical keyworkers and student who have been identified as vulnerable. All other students will receive remote learning.

This temporary attendance policy relates to attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aspects of schools individual attendance policies may still apply around reporting absence for instance.

### **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus which is linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Symptoms can include fever, a loss or change to taste and smell, cough and shortness of breath. In severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. These symptoms are very similar to the flu or the common cold, which is more common than COVID-19.

### **How COVID-19 spreads**

The virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person through coughing and sneezing. Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching their face. COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it.

Links to more detailed and further guidance can be found below. Schools and parents or carers can keep up to date by following the government links below.

This includes advice on:

- How to help prevent spread of all respiratory infections - including COVID-19
- What to do if someone confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 has been in a school or other educational setting;
- What advice to give to individuals who have travelled from specified countries or areas within the last 14 days.

## **Virus Guidance**

Schools and parents or carers should refer to the latest information and advice from the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to get the most up to date guidance as things develop: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

## **Education Guidance**

The Government has published guidance for schools and other educational settings in providing advice for students, staff and parents/carers about the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. The following link will take you to that advice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

## **2. Which Students should Attend?**

### **Provision from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

Student attendance will not be mandatory within the period of the lockdown stated by the Government. Early years, schools and colleges remain open only for vulnerable children and children of critical workers only.

#### **For children of critical workers**

It will not be compulsory to take up the place made available. Early years providers, schools and colleges should speak with parents to discuss what provision is needed as many parents working in critical sectors will be able to ensure their child is kept at home safely.

#### **For vulnerable children and young people**

For vulnerable children and young people who have a social worker, or those who are deemed otherwise vulnerable attendance is expected. For those who have an education health and care (EHC) plan, attendance is expected where it is determined.

#### **Students who have been identified to attend school should not attend if:**

- They are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- They are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- They are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

### 3. Simple Strategies to slow down or Prevent COVID-19 and keep people safe.

As with other respiratory infections like the flu or the common cold, public health measures are critical to slow the spread of the illness.

Students will be expected to adhere to the following basic measures when they return to school.

Public health measures are everyday preventive actions that include:

- **Social distancing which is staying 2 metres** (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with.
- **Staying at home when you have the symptoms.** You are advised to book a free COVID-19 test via [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website.
- Follow the **Catch it, Kill it, Bin it** protocol. Covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing and sneezing disposing of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands.
- **Washing hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water** especially when leaving the house or arriving home, arriving at school and leaving school, after blowing your nose, coughing and sneezing and before eating or handling food.
- **Cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects.**
- **Avoid public transport** by walking or cycling. If you have to use public transport wear something that covers your nose and mouth.
- **Adhere to other individual school protocols** including things such as arrival and leaving times, one way systems, use of equipment etc.

### 4. Recording Attendance during COVID-19

From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Schools are instructed to:

- Resume taking the attendance register for all students who are expected to attend.
- Follow up any student absence and/or non-engagement with remote learning
- C codes to be used for absent students who are expected to attend school and the absence is not Covid-19 related.
- Complete the Public Health questionnaire via Anycomms
- Complete the Department for Education daily educational setting status form from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 by 12pm.

The following **register codes** should be used from 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Code	Recorded as	Information
/ \	Present	Students who are in attendance at school
B	Present	Students attending an alternative provision (educated off site)
C	Authorised Absence	Leave of absence authorised by the school as well as students that are expected to attend but parents or carers refuse to send them.
D	Not expected to attend	Will be used for any students attending another provision which they are registered at. (This may include Hospital and Home Education students and also any students on a managed move or who is at a PRU)
E	Authorised Absence	Excluded
H	Authorised Absence	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Authorised Absence	Student cannot attend due to illness not relating to Covid-19 and the school has received satisfactory medical evidence
J	Present	Students who are at an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment
M	Authorised Absence	Student cannot attend due to a medical or dentist appointment and the school has received satisfactory medical evidence
P	Present	Students who are participating in a supervised sporting activity
R	Authorised Absence	Religious observance
S	Authorised Absence	Study Leave
T	Authorised Absence	Gypsy, Roma and Travellers absence
V	Present	Students who are on an educational visit or trip
W	Present	Students who are on work experience
X	Not expected to attend	Students who are not required to be on school in year 12 & 13. This code is to be used for students not attending a session who meet the criteria for not attending in circumstances related to COVID-19 e.g. in the instance of a full National lockdown as of 5.1.21
Y	Not expected to attend	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Not expected to attend	Student not on admission register
#	Not expected to attend	Used for planned whole or partial school closure.

### **Attendance coding in an event of a national or local lockdown (as at 5.1.21)**

Schools should also continue to record attendance in their usual attendance register for all students and use the following coding:

**Where a school is closed to all students** for any session, schools should record X code for all students.

**Where a school is open to vulnerable children and children of critical workers**, schools should use the following codes:

All students who are not eligible or not expected to attend a session should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). This includes children of critical workers whose parents have indicated they will not attend a given session. Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children – usually it is only used when non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are awaiting Covid-19 test results, self-isolating, or have an education, health and care plan (EHCP), and whose risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met in school, should be recorded as code X (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances). Temporarily, code X can be used where a student is not attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19)

Where a vulnerable child does not attend school due to parent's or carers refusing to send them is recorded as a C code.

Where a vulnerable or keyworker student does not attend school when they are expected to the absence should be recorded using the appropriate authorised absence code.

Students attending alternative provision should be recorded as B code on receipt of their attendance. Appropriate authorised absence code is to be used if the student fails to attend when expected if the absence is not related to Covid-19. If the students is not expected to attend on certain days X code should be used.

Students who are dual registered should be recorded as D code on receipt of their attendance.

## **5. Reporting Absence during COVID-19**

### **If a student becomes ill or fails to attend remote lessons**

- Parents and carers must contact the school via the school's absence line stating the students name and year group and reason for absence. This may be due to illness, self-isolation, quarantine, or other personal circumstances.
- If a student tests positive, they inform the school and self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. If the child lives in the same household, or has been in direct contact with a confirmed case of Coronavirus then they must self-isolate for 14 days. This should be recorded on SIMs by the school as a comment and date stamped so school is clear when any isolation period will end.
- Parents are advised to follow government guidance on testing if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or they suspect somebody in their family has



it. Parents and carers should keep school updated and report any confirmed cases.

- In event that a student is absent from remote lessons and no contact has been made by parent or carer, the school will make contact with the named parent/carer as indicated in SIMs. This should be a telephone call, but other methods of communication (e.g. text message or email) will be attempted if the telephone call is not successful. If it is necessary to contact a large volume of parents/carers rapidly then initial contact will be through text message with the anticipation of a response from the student. This will be followed up by a call, if necessary and escalated without appropriate response. If no contact is made a risk assessment should be conducted to ascertain whether a home visit should be carried out. Schools should follow the protocol for home visits, as set out in the Trust's safeguarding protocol

All reasons for absence from remote learning must be recorded by each school and students coded appropriately for monitoring, recording and reporting purposes.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or DfE is updated around attendance. The policy will be available on the school website for reference.

## **7. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Covid-19 Safeguarding Policy Addendum
- Behaviour Policy

## Appendix 1 – Definition of Vulnerable People

### Who is 'clinically extremely vulnerable'?

Expert doctors in England have identified specific medical conditions that, based on what we know about the virus so far, place someone at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people may include the following people. Disease severity, history or treatment levels will also affect who is in this group.

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers:
  - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
  - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
  - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
  - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
  - people having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
  - people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary (COPD).
4. People with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

People in this group should have been contacted to tell them they are clinically extremely vulnerable.

If you're still concerned, you should discuss your concerns with your GP or hospital clinician.

- If they're clinically vulnerable – parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category, and staff in this category should continue to work from home wherever possible

## **Who is clinically vulnerable?**

If you have any of the following health conditions, you are clinically vulnerable, meaning you are at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. You are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if you do go out, take particular care to minimise contact with others outside your household.

Clinically vulnerable people are those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- a weakened immune system as the result of certain conditions, treatments like chemotherapy, or medicines such as steroid tablets
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- pregnant women

As above, there is a further category of people with serious underlying health conditions who are clinically extremely vulnerable, meaning they are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus. You, your family and carers should be aware of the guidance on shielding which provides information on how to protect yourself still further should you wish to.

- If they live with someone who's clinically extremely vulnerable, they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, they're able to understand and follow those instructions
- If they live with someone who's clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), they can attend school
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of coronavirus, or living with anyone experiencing symptoms, shouldn't attend