



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Appendix COVID-19

September 2020

Rodmarton Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share the same commitment. All staff and volunteers are subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Please refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for more information.

'We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.'

Attendance from September 2020

Missing out on time in school, risks all children falling behind their peers. After an extended period out of school it is vitally important that all our children return to school this autumn to minimise the impact of the pandemic.

Attendance is therefore mandatory from the beginning of the autumn term, except where statutory exemptions apply in line with the Coronavirus Act 2020. The normal rules and sanctions as outlined in Section 444(1) and (1A) of the Education Act 1996 (England) will now be reapplied.

From this point on the usual rules of school attendance apply;

- Parents have a duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of a compulsory school age,
- Schools have a responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence
- Schools are able to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' code of conduct.

In line with the checklist from the Department for Education, our school will ensure that it follows this five-step process at all times.

1. Plan - for full attendance for all pupils and the value of this.
2. Communicate- with all stakeholders' expectations and importance of full attendance
3. Be consistent - set and maintain a culture of high expectations of all within community.
4. Support - for those within the community that need additional support to get back into school regularly.
5. Monitor and Improve to ensure that schools high expectations and additional support are having the impact intended.

We will ensure that we regularly remind all within our community of our expectations of attendance.

Pupils or Parents demonstrating symptoms of Coronavirus

Should a child or a member of their family display any symptoms of Covid-19 they must not enter the school grounds.

Parents must inform school by contacting the school Office if their child is ill, and/or displaying symptoms of coronavirus, and is unable to attend school as a result.

Parents should contact NHS 111online or call 119 to arrange a test. We will regularly remind parents of what to do if they demonstrate symptoms.

We will follow the Public Health England guidance at all times when a parent or pupil demonstrates signs of Covid-19.

Organisation of the school day.

Because of the expectation that to reduce risk of transmission of the virus, school will continue to operate staggered start times to the day, we have amended the start of our school day accordingly. This will mean that there will be a staggered close of registration for each staggered starts and registers will close 15 minutes after the start times for each class.

The Department for Education is clear that whilst schools will need to stagger start and end times for pupils to avoid mass gatherings, schools must ensure that this does not impact on teaching time for pupils. We have ensured that we have met this expectation by adjusting our finish times to make up for this change.

If a pupil that is expected to be in school does not attend by 9:30am, we will contact the pupil's parent's/carers, once the registers have closed for the morning session to ensure that school staff are aware of the reasons for non-attendance. Because of the risks of transmission of Covid-19 this is vitally important. In line with the current requirement, staff will follow PHE guidance for any child who is not attending because of coronavirus.

For all other absences school staff will ensure that they follow the school's normal policy and procedure including Children Missing Education guidance.

Statutory exemptions

In line with the latest guidance there are now a small number of pupils who will be exempt from mandatory attendance because of the exceptional reasons outlined below.

- Pupils who are unable to attend school in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has had coronavirus.
- If rates of the disease rise in local areas, there may be occasions where children (or family members) from that area, and that area only will be advised to shield for this period, whilst transmission rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent. We will ensure that for these pupils, education will be provided remotely.

Where children are not able to attend school for either of the reasons above, then absence will not be penalised.

Pupils who were previously shielding

From 1st August, shielding advice and guidance for all adults and children was paused, subject to the continued decline in the community transmission of the coronavirus. Children who were previously on this list can now safely return to school as can those who had family members who were shielding.

If the rates of the disease rise in local areas, children who were on the shielding list may be contacted by government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period of time the rates remain high. The letter that families received to inform them of this, should be shared with the school.

Local Lockdown.

Local authorities have been delegated the power to enforce a local lockdown, should transmission rates rise. Should there be the necessity for a local lockdown, then rules that were in place between March 23rd and 1st June will apply.

Children of critical workers and those judged to be vulnerable will be invited to attend school. All other pupils will be at home and will access education remotely in line with schools own systems.

As was the case in this initial period, in line with Department for Education guidance, no parent will be penalised for their child's absence should a local lockdown be enforced.

Support for parents and carers with managing anxieties.

We respect the concerns of parents and carers. Any parent and carer that has concern about their child returning to school should contact the Headteacher to discuss this concern so that in partnership, with support, we can ensure that all pupils attend regularly.

We can reassure parents of the safeguards put in place in line with Public Health England's (PHE's) advice. We will provide reassurance when necessary.

If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, then the Headteacher will meet with parents remotely or socially distanced to discuss their concerns and the measures that they are putting into place to reduce the risk.

We will continue to work closely with social care, virtual school and other professionals to safeguard pupils.

If a vulnerable pupil does not attend school, the social worker and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will explore the reasons for this directly with the parents/carer so that it is resolved as soon as possible, and the pupil return to full attendance.

However, it remains an expectation that all children of compulsory school age should be in school unless there is a statutory reason that applies in line with the normal school attendance policy or the exemptions mentioned above. We will continue to work with parents to ensure that this is addressed as quickly as possible.

Taking the register.

All schools will resume normal procedures for completing the school's registers. Staff must use attendance codes consistently to ensure that an accurate record is kept. The DFE has created a new category of non-attendance for the academic year of 2020/21 to record any pupil who does not attend because the travel to, or attendance at school would be either;

- contrary to guidance from Public Health England, or Department of Health and Social Care
- prohibited by legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19.

In line with the guidance from the Secretary of State, no parent will be penalised for following official public health guidance for their child not to attend a session.

Registration Codes

From the start of the academic year normal registration codes will apply.

Should any pupil not attend a session because of either of the two reasons above, then the code X will be used to record their non-attendance. This code will not count as an absence in the census data.

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. Schools should 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. Code X should 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 should 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, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should 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 by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

Parents will have planned their holidays taking into account term times. However, with the rapidly changing picture around the necessity for pupils to quarantine following a planned holiday, some pupils may not be able to return to school at the start of term. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine because of government guidance, then the Code X should be used in the register for this period.

Monitoring of attendance

We will continue to monitor pupil's attendance by regularly reviewing our registers to ensure that any pupil whose attendance begins to cause concern; their parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Headteacher.

We will make sure that support is put into place to work with parents and carers to address attendance concerns. Advice and guidance for schools can be obtained from the LA from <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2098222/inclusion-teams-guidance.docx> and <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/school-provision-during-covid-19-crisis/gcc-guidance/>

If issues with attendance cannot be resolved despite additional support from school, then school will follow guidance in consultation with the local authority inclusion officers to determine next steps which could involve penalties.