

Troon School Attendance Expectation in relation to a Pandemic

Rationale

In March 2020 when schools were first notified that they must close due to COVID 19, the regulations were disapplied to ensure that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

However, the circumstances have now changed, and the regulations have been reapplied with the expectation that all children will return to school with the legal responsibility falling to parents to ensure that their children do so. **School attendance is mandatory for all children commencing the Autumn term 2020.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

The DfE have provided guidance for schools in relation to managing Pandemic related absence and the Coding Guidance 2020/21 lays out the expectation for schools and parents in relation to coding for absence that is related to the Pandemic for the 2020/21 academic year.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

We understand the impact that the pandemic will have had on our children, but we know that any further disruption to their school attendance will have a much longer impact on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We are assured by Public Health that the risks to children of becoming severely ill from COVID 19 is extremely low, but we appreciate that as parents the concerns for yourselves or other family members may take priority, and as such we want to ensure that support is available for you and your child to provide access to their education with minimum risk to the wider family.

Shielding advice for all adults and children has been paused as of 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.

However, we accept that 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 we record this accurately and consistently, we will be adhering to the changes in the regulations governing school attendance registers to use the new

category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’

This category must 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)

We will only apply the COVID 19 code where parents evidence the child has met the criteria. If we do not receive evidence that the COVID 19 criteria has been met, the absence will be unauthorised and the main body of our attendance policy will apply. Of specific note:

- *parents’ 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’*

In any suspected COVID 19 case, either child or household member, in accordance with guidance, all should self-isolate until a test has been taken. If the test is negative, the child can return to school. If the test is positive, we will require evidence and the child should then continue to self-isolate for the remainder of the period up to 14 days from when the symptoms started.

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

We will provide access to learning when a child is deemed well enough.

NB – Where a child self isolates for suspected COVID 19 for which a test is negative, but they are still too unwell to return, usual absence management will apply.

Leave of Absence

Our school understands that the unprecedented events of 2020 in relation to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic may have led to families taking holidays at times they may not ordinarily have considered for a variety of pandemic related reasons.

In order for us to properly consider each request on its own merit, it will now be more important than ever to provide us with full details of the reason for the holiday request and in what regard the LOA has been adversely affected by the pandemic. Please include any additional information and/or evidence on the request form.

Please ensure that you inform us and evidence if you are a front line worker, such as, but not limited to NHS, police etc who has had leave cancelled or blocked within the school holidays, which has resulted in the request for LOA in term time.

Please be advised that usual procedures will apply for LOA in term time that is not deemed by the Head Teacher to be that of exceptional circumstance. All decisions are final and there is no right to appeal.

If you decide to still take your child out of school, without permission, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to Cornwall Council who may decide to take legal action against you. A penalty notice can be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine per child, per parent of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in Court action. Persistent absences not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court, leading to fines up to £2,500 and/or custodial sentences. **The Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.**

