



**Tudhoe Learning Trust**

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Recording Attendance Data</b>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registers</li><li>• Amendments to the attendance register</li><li>• Computerised Data</li></ul>	
<b>Absence</b>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Covid-19</li><li>• Authorised Absence</li><li>• Unauthorised Absence</li><li>• Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children away during term time</li></ul>	
<b>Punctuality</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Monitoring attendance and responding to patterns of absence</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Supporting the reintegration of pupils after extended absences</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Taking Pupils off Roll</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Encouraging good attendance and punctuality</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communicating with parents</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Further information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
Frequently asked questions	Appendix 1
Covid-19 Isolation Flowchart	Appendix 2

## Introduction

Tudhoe Learning Trust seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive a full education, which maximises the opportunities for inclusion and achievement at school so that each pupil is able to realise their full potential.

All children between the ages of 5 and 11 are legally required to be educated.

Pupils, parents and carers, teachers, support staff and governors all have a role in maintaining a high standard of attendance and punctuality.

***EVERY LESSON COUNTS! EVEN CASUAL ABSENCE CAN AFFECT***

***CHILDRENS ATTAINMENT.***

This policy should be read in conjunction with DFE school attendance guidance for 2020 which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

There is an addendum to the document which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

### **Aims of the Policy**

To improve and maintain the overall attendance of pupils at school.

To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for all people involved in maintaining pupil attendance and punctuality.

To implement a system of sanctions and rewards.

To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and responding to attendance data.

## Recording Attendance Data

### **Registers**

The registers are completed by 9.00 a.m. at the beginning of the morning and 1.15 p.m. for the afternoon session, and are returned to the office within 10 minutes, when the registers close.

A mark / (a.m.) and \ (p.m.) is used to indicate present and red circles are used to indicate absence and lateness.

All authorised absences must have the correct code entered with an explanation. The codes are provided in each register.

All lateness must be marked with an L and the time. If a pupil arrives after the register closes without an acceptable explanation, it is marked with a U and is considered as an unauthorised absence.

A new attendance recording category has been introduced 'not attending in

circumstances relating to coronavirus (Covid-19). Examples of this category include:-

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
- Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only
- Local lockdown

Where a pupil is absent for circumstances relating to coronavirus, code X should be used. See flowchart at Appendix 1 which summarises circumstances where pupils may be required to self-isolate.

If mistakes are made when making an entry on the register, a note should be made indicating which entry is correct.

**Tippex and pencil must not be used.**

If a staff member other than the class teacher receives information about attendance or lateness, they are to inform the office staff.

#### **Amendments to the Attendance Register**

Every amendment made to the attendance register will include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

#### **Computerised Data**

The information in the registers will be entered regularly onto the computer by the office staff and will be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **Absence**

If a pupil is absent for any reason, parents or carers are required to contact the school office on the first day of absence giving reason for the absence.

If there is no call from a parent or carer, the school will phone home to inform the parent or carer that the pupil is not in school and enquire why.

#### **Covid-19**

If a pupil, or a member of their household, has one or more of the following symptoms:

- A high temperature - feeling hot to the touch on back or chest
- A new continuous cough - coughing a lot for more than an hour or 3 or more coughing episodes in a 24 hour period (for those that usually have a cough, this may be worse than usual)
- A loss of change to sense of smell or taste - you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste differently to normal.

Parents/carers must immediately take the following actions:

- Report the reason for absence to school
- Self-isolate

- Arrange a coronavirus test
- Provide school with the test results

**Note** - the person with symptoms must self-isolate for 10 days and other members of the household should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person had symptoms.

Where a test result is positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but symptoms develop, the isolation period of 10 days should restart from the day when symptoms developed. Self-isolation means not leaving the home, attending school or receiving visitors.

Where a test result is negative, the pupil can return to school.

Where a pupil has symptoms at school, the school will follow the safety measures set out by government and parents/carers will be contacted to arrange for the pupil to be collected.

Where parents/carers have followed the reporting procedure and provided test results, these absences will be authorised by the school. Where pupils are self-isolating but do not have symptoms, work to do at home may be provided.

Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides.

#### **Authorised Absence**

An authorised absence is when a pupil is away for a reason acceptable to the school. The school (not the parent/carer) determines whether an absence is authorised after receipt of a verbal or written explanation from the parent/carer. Explanations from pupils or siblings are not sufficient.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

The school will follow up on all unauthorised absences, communicating parental responsibility for providing explanations. This is to ascertain the reason for the absence, ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken as appropriate and identify whether the absence is approved or not. The school may follow up via one or all of the following methods:-

- Unauthorised absence letter
- Phone call home
- Text to contact number provided

#### **Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children away during term time.**

Special leave of absence can be authorised at the Head Teacher's discretion. Longer periods of absence may only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Any leave of absence for medical appointment or religious observance will go to the child's teacher. If a parent/carer feels it is absolutely unavoidable to take their child out of school for leave of absence, they must complete an absence request form, in advance, for consideration by the Head Teacher.

Any special leave of absence which including a request for a child to be out of school for over 1 day can only be authorised by the Head Teacher. Each case will be

considered individually based on the nature of the event, history of term time absences, the pupil's current attendance, age, achievement, and the time of year with respect to the curriculum. Parents will be informed in writing of the decision on their request.

Any time taken without the school's authorisation, or any additional time taken over and above the amount authorised will be recorded as unauthorised absence. If a pupil does not return on the agreed date, the school will make every effort to contact the family by telephone and in writing. If no contact is made, or if the absence has been extended for anything other than unavoidable circumstances, the school will refer the family to Education Welfare Service (EWS) if they do not return within 10 school days. If no contact is made with the family by EWS then a letter will be sent to parent/carer informing them that the pupil has been taken off roll, this will always be done in consultation with EWS.

## **Punctuality**

School starts at 8.55 a.m. It is expected that all pupils arrive in good time. If pupils arrive after 9.05 they will be marked as late. Lateness is monitored using SIMs regularly and discussed with EWS.

A late letter will automatically be sent to parents/carers if there is regular lateness. All unauthorised late pupils (those after the register closes) will be treated as absences.

## **Monitoring Attendance and Responding to Patterns of Absence**

School staff will respond when a pattern of low attendance emerges.

The school is responsible for initial interventions. When a pattern of poor attendance emerges, a discussion is needed between the class teacher and school management to determine a course of action.

If a class teacher makes initial contact with a parent and there is no improvement, school management must be informed and will arrange to contact a parent/carer. If there is still no improvement after suitable interventions by the school, the EWO may become involved.

Although all cases are considered individually, the EWS will generally become involved when a pupil's attendance falls below 75% in one term.

To ensure that all patterns of low attendance are identified, the education welfare officer will meet with the school's named attendance person (usually a member of senior management) each half term to discuss and agree a course of action for all pupils with attendance under 90%. The agreed action may include:

- Closely monitoring the situation
- A letter from the school
- A meeting with the school (possibly with EWS present)
- A formal referral to EWS (which can include home visits, referrals to outside agencies and statutory action)

A series of standard letters are available to be sent to parents. These will be sent out by the school.

## **Supporting the Reintegration of Pupils After Extended Absences**

All pupils who return to school after an extended period of absence need to be supported. Each case will be considered individually and a plan will be drawn up to best support the pupil's academic and social reintegration into the school.

## **Taking Pupils off Roll**

All pupils who leave to attend another school (except for secondary school transfers) will remain on roll until their admission elsewhere is confirmed. In the case of pupils who disappear (i.e. leave with no indication of where they are going or whether they will return), the school will make every effort to contact the family on the telephone and in writing. If contact cannot be established, the school will make a formal referral to EWS.

## **Encouraging Good Attendance and Punctuality**

Whole school activities will raise the profile of attendance and punctuality through:

- Newsletters
- Certificates for 100% attendance for each academic year

## **Communicating with Parents**

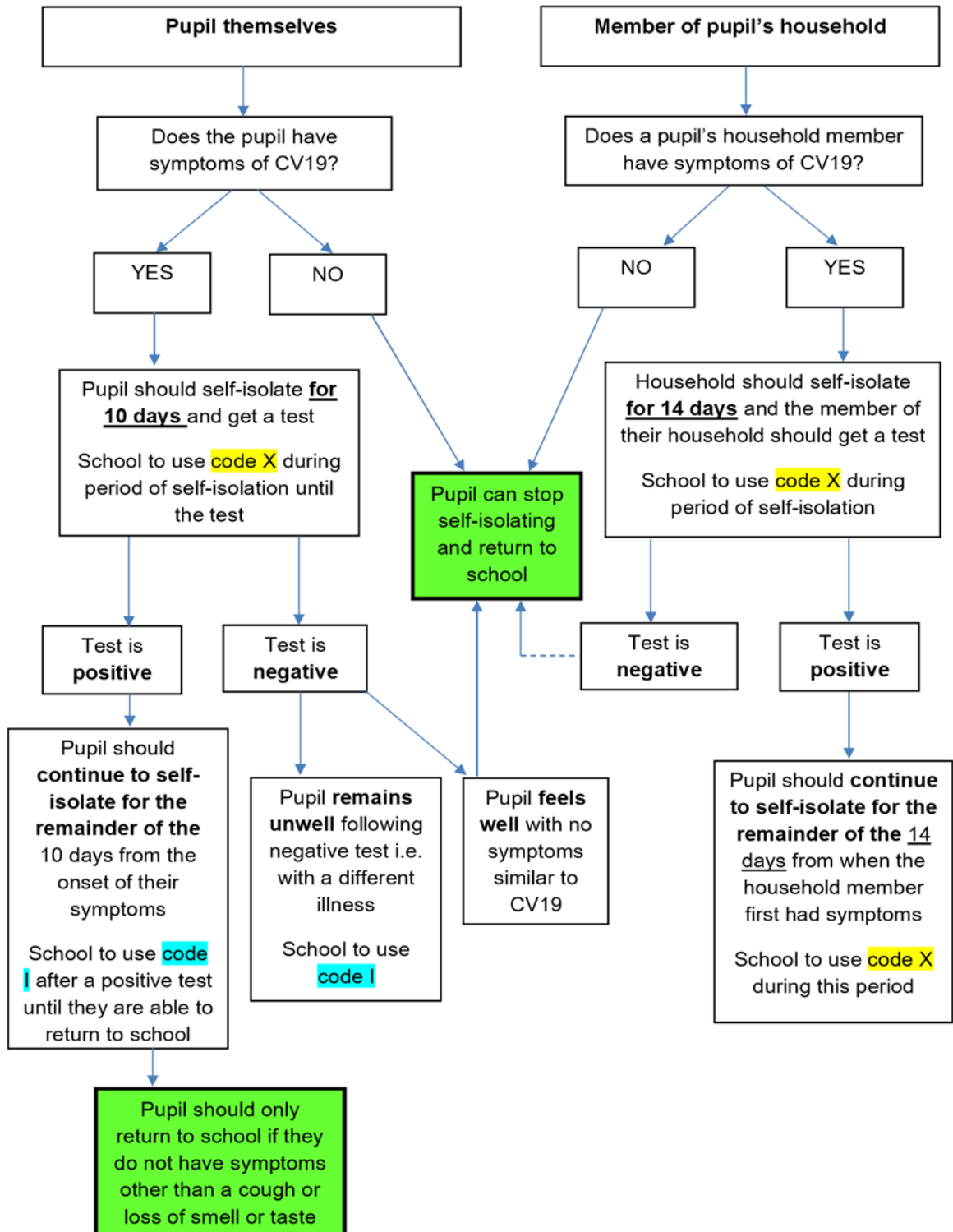
It is essential the parents/carers of all pupils understand the school's attendance policy and their role in ensuring their child has good attendance. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children arrive at school on time each day. Parents/carers must contact the school in person or on the telephone to provide an explanation on the first day their child is absent.

## **Further Information**

Frequently asked questions are available at Appendix 2.

Further information is available from the Trust Office via [office@tudhoelearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:office@tudhoelearningtrust.co.uk)

**Pupils required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household has symptom or confirmed COVID-19**





## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is school attendance mandatory from September 2020?

Yes, the Government have advised that school attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

### Which of the usual school attendance rules will apply in September 2020?

All of the usual rules will apply including:

- 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.

### Are pupils who are shielding or self-isolating expected to attend in September?

The Government state that now much more is known about COVID-19, in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. However:

- 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);
- 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. Read the [current advice on shielding](#) ;
- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that 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 in September (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

### What if a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and / or public health advice?

The Government expects schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education and schools should monitor engagement with this activity as set out in Government guidance.

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

### What about pupils and families who are anxious about returning to school / their educational setting?

The Government have made it clear that all other pupils must attend school. They state that schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased

risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes. If parents of pupils with significant risk factors are concerned, we recommend settings discuss their concerns and provide reassurance of the measures they are putting in place to reduce the risk in school. Settings should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, if the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance). The Government recognise that some children and young people with EHC plans will need preparation for their return to full provision. This might include, for instance, visits to the setting, social stories, and any other approaches that settings and local authorities would normally use to enable a child or young person with SEND who has spent some time out of education, to return to full time attendance.

#### What actions are schools and local authorities expected to take?

The Government are asking schools to work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of term as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

The Government are also asking schools and local authorities to:

- communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year;
- identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them. This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic;
- use the additional catch-up funding schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance;
- work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance

#### My summer holiday plans were cancelled due to Covid-19 and I have now arranged these during term time. Will the absence be approved?

Head Teachers are unable to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school will consider each request for leave of absence individually, taking into account the circumstances such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via the school office. Any leave of absence request made retrospectively will automatically be unauthorised. Leave is unlikely to be authorised for the purposes of a family holiday.