

School Attendance – Autumn 2020 Onwards

DfE Attendance Expectations – taken from the September 2020 reopening guidance

'In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear no parent 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/students 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' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil/student 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'

How will this work within the STAR Multi-Academy Trust

Our starting principle is that we want all pupils/students who can possibly attend, to do so on a daily basis, to maximise the educational opportunities which full time schooling has to offer.

We recognise that a very small number of pupils/students may not be able to attend:

- Because their health advice might be to continue to shield; or that local data might indicate shielding to re-commence in our area;
- Because the pupil/student might be symptomatic and therefore self-isolating or waiting for Covid-19 test results; pupils/students may also of course be symptomatic of illnesses other than Covid-19 and unable to attend.

In effect, all other pupils/students should attend. We recognise of course that some pupils/students and families might be anxious about return and we urge communication with your child's school if this is the case. We will strive to support every pupil/student possible to return to school as soon as possible.

Ultimately, attendance sanctions might be enforced such as fixed penalty notices, but we would not intend to use them as our default position. We would far rather positively engage in discussion to support your child in a full return to school. Please therefore consider whether you feel that your child might need additional support in managing the transition back to school and make contact with your child's school if needed.