



Osborne
Co-operative Academy Trust

Self-help
Self-responsibility
Equity
Equality
Democracy
Solidarity

Attendance Policy

First Reviewed by Trust Board: April 2019

Review Frequency: Annual

Date of last review: June 2021

Date of next review: 2022

Version Control

Author	Date Created	Version	Notes
L. Coates	April 2019	1.0	
L. Coates/M. Brice	November 2020	1.1	Covid-19 Addendum
L.Coates/M.Brice	June 2021	1.2	Covid-19 Addendum updated guidance

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust (MAT) incorporated around the principles and values of the international co-operative movement. These are Equality, Equity, Democracy, Self-help, Self-Responsibility and Solidarity, along with the ethical values of openness, honesty, social responsibility and caring for others. These values and principles underpin all our actions.

Aims

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust requires its schools to:

- Instil the expectation that all members of the Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust have excellent attendance to ensure that the central purpose of learning is not disrupted.
- Establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice, and support and maintain dialogue and a shared concern for the education and success of the pupil.
- Continually monitor the curriculum and learning environment to ensure the promotion of good attendance developing a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels safe and secure.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's co-operative values, ethos and curriculum
- Maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality, establishing **96% and above** as the benchmark for all pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is a pupil welfare and safeguarding issue. Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust takes its safeguarding responsibilities in these areas very seriously. Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.

Trust Educational Welfare Officers (EWO)

- Maintain regular contact with the school and support the Attendance Officers in carrying out their duties
- Develop effective relationships with potentially vulnerable families
- Carry out home visits following a prolonged absence, lack of contact or a concern raised by the school
- Collaborate with the Local Authority to ensure that all requested documentation for Court cases is completed in a timely manner
- Attend court cases when required

School Staff

- Attendance Registers are legal documents and must be accurate. Within every Trust school teachers will be expected to take a register at the beginning of every session in our Secondary Schools and at the start of the morning and afternoon session in our Primary Schools. No blanks should be left on the register, any pupil not present when the register is taken should be marked absent.
- Each school will hold an appendix to this policy detailing the actions taken if a child is absent or missing from a session.
- Where a pupil has not attended school for one week medical evidence will be required or the absence will be coded as an unauthorised holiday and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- Absence of 10% will be recorded as persistently absent in line with national expectations.
- Each school will embed systems that raise the awareness of the importance of attendance that will support the pupils in achieving at least national expectation of attendance at 96% or above.

- Attendance will be monitored closely and reported at half termly meetings of the Local Governing Body and at a Trust Board level through the School on a Page (SOAP.)

Parents/Carers

Have a responsibility to:

- Understand that they are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, in school uniform and ready to learn.
- Telephone their child's school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for absence and give an expected return date. The timing of this phone call will be established in each school's appendix to this policy.
- Provide an up to date contact number and an emergency number that may be used in exceptional circumstances. It is important, that should the need arise, we can contact Parents/Carers without delay.
- Note the dates of public, statutory and internal examination periods. These are usually held in May/June each year. The dates for public examinations cannot be changed for any reason. If the public exams and Statutory Assessment Tests are missed they cannot be retaken during that examination cycle.
- Adhere to government guidance regarding term time holidays (any holiday taken in term time will be unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice.)

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Historically a Headteacher had authority to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" for up to 10 school days per year. **This is no longer the case.**

In September 2013 amendments were made to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006'. As a result of this Headteachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust understands the various reasons for parents/carers taking children on holiday during term time i.e. financial savings, restricted working holidays etc., however these would not be considered exceptional circumstances. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. A pupil who has 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year.

Holidays are not authorised during term time in response to the Government and Thurrock/Essex Authority initiative and has been agreed by Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust Board. Holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Our schools follow the recommended practice for Government and Thurrock/Essex Authority initiative.

- Parents/Carers take responsibility for ensuring children's regular, uninterrupted school attendance.
- Parents/Carers do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday.
- In exceptional circumstances (see below) it may be necessary for planned absence. All such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher .
- If leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded as unauthorised absence, and a Penalty Notice may be issued. This is set by regulation at £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- Penalty Notices must be paid in full. Instalment payment is not acceptable.
- If the recipient fails to pay the fine within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies, save for in very limited circumstances when the Notice may be withdrawn.

Exceptional Circumstances

These are examples of what **MIGHT** be considered to be exceptional circumstances. In all cases, the Headteacher will decide this on a case by case basis using this policy for guidance.

- A close relative is terminally ill and the holiday is likely to be the last such holiday.
- Religious observance.
- An agreed educational activity; prestigious performance/audition.

Leave will not be granted if:

- A holiday has been taken at any point in the pupil's school career.
- A pupil's attendance over the previous 20 week period is less than 96%.
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, particularly the autumn term when pupils are settling in to their new year group.
- It coincides with tests, exams, SATs or other significant events in the school calendar.
- Pupils are in years 6 or 11.

Leave of absence forms should be obtained from the school office and submitted back to the school at least 5 working days before the first day of intended absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt learning. Whilst absent they miss the teaching provided and are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons after their return.

Punctuality

Any pupil arriving later than registration should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the school office. If accompanied, a parent/carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The pupil will then be sent to their classroom. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Arriving late can be embarrassing for the pupil which may then encourage further absence. Good timekeeping is an important life skill which will help our pupils as they move through their school life and out into the wider world.

Children Missing in Education

A registered pupil is deemed to be missing when:

- a) They fail to attend school without any explanation;
- b) The school has been unable to establish the reason, or locate the pupil with any of the contact names at the last known address, or from intelligence from the wider school community; or
- c) The pupil's parents/carers have not provided any information to indicate a change of education provision, unavoidable cause for the pupil's absence or that the pupil is travelling with them whilst in pursuit of their business.

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust schools will adhere to the guidance set out in 'Thurrock Council Protocol and Procedures' and 'Essex County Council Children Missing from Education Policy' for:

- Children missing education
- Children not in receipt of full time education
- Children missing from a school role

Electronic copies are available at: www.thurrock.gov.uk/information-for-schools. Essex schools will have access to Essex County Council policies via Infolink.

Within each school's appendix actions will be identified for pupils at high risk (if a child is subject to Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or is a Child Looked After. Alternative actions will be identified for pupils who are not deemed to be at high risk in line with the above guidance. However, if at any time the schools have concerns about a pupil's welfare they should refer to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Pupils missing from school - high risk

The following actions will be taken by professionals if a child goes missing from a school roll and is considered to be at high risk.

This applies to any child that is:

- subject to a child protection plan
- subject to a child in need plan
- a looked after child

The child's key worker is to be notified within the first 24 hours of the unauthorised absence if no home contact can be made. An immediate Child Missing Education (CME) referral should also be made to the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer, who will arrange for the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to contact the key worker and agree a plan of action.

Where it is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk or harm, or where there is information or reason to suspect the pupil has been a victim of criminal activity:

- the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub should be notified immediately
- the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be notified as soon as possible afterwards

Pupils missing from school - not high risk

The following actions will be taken by professionals if a child goes missing from a school roll but the child is not considered to be at high risk.

Days 1 to 5

Follow first day calling and contact procedures as defined by the school policy. Continuous efforts should be made by the school to make contact with the family, including calling all emergency contacts and home visits.

Days 6 to 10

Where a pupil has been absent for more than 5 school days, and all efforts to contact the family have been unsuccessful, the school should complete the 'Missing Pupil Checklist - Action for Schools'. This is available from the LA Education Welfare Service (EWS).

If the child remains missing the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer for Thurrock/Essex should be contacted no later than the tenth day of absence to arrange for a referral to be made.

The referral should include all the attempts made by the school to make contact and any other information that the school hold. Schools should continue checks on a daily basis and update us if any further information is obtained.

The Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer will link with relevant officers, agencies and local authorities to continue efforts to track and trace the pupil.

Days 11 to 19

Once a referral has been sent to the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer, schools should continue to make efforts to contact the family and assist the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer and other agencies in the search. If, during this time, the child is located and confirmed to be living outside of a reasonable distance to the school, the LA investigation officer and schools will agree a date from which the pupil may be removed from roll.

Day 20

After 20 days of unauthorised absence, if the pupil remains a child missing education (CME) and efforts to trace them have been unsuccessful, the EWS will:

- review the situation with the school
- notify the school and other relevant agencies in writing

If the decision is made to remove the child from the school roll, the pupil's records must be uploaded to the 'Lost Pupils' database using the statutory electronic Common Transfer File (CTF).

As CME status may raise child protection issues, if schools believe a child or family has gone missing, the child should remain on the school roll until all enquiries have been completed by the school and EWS.

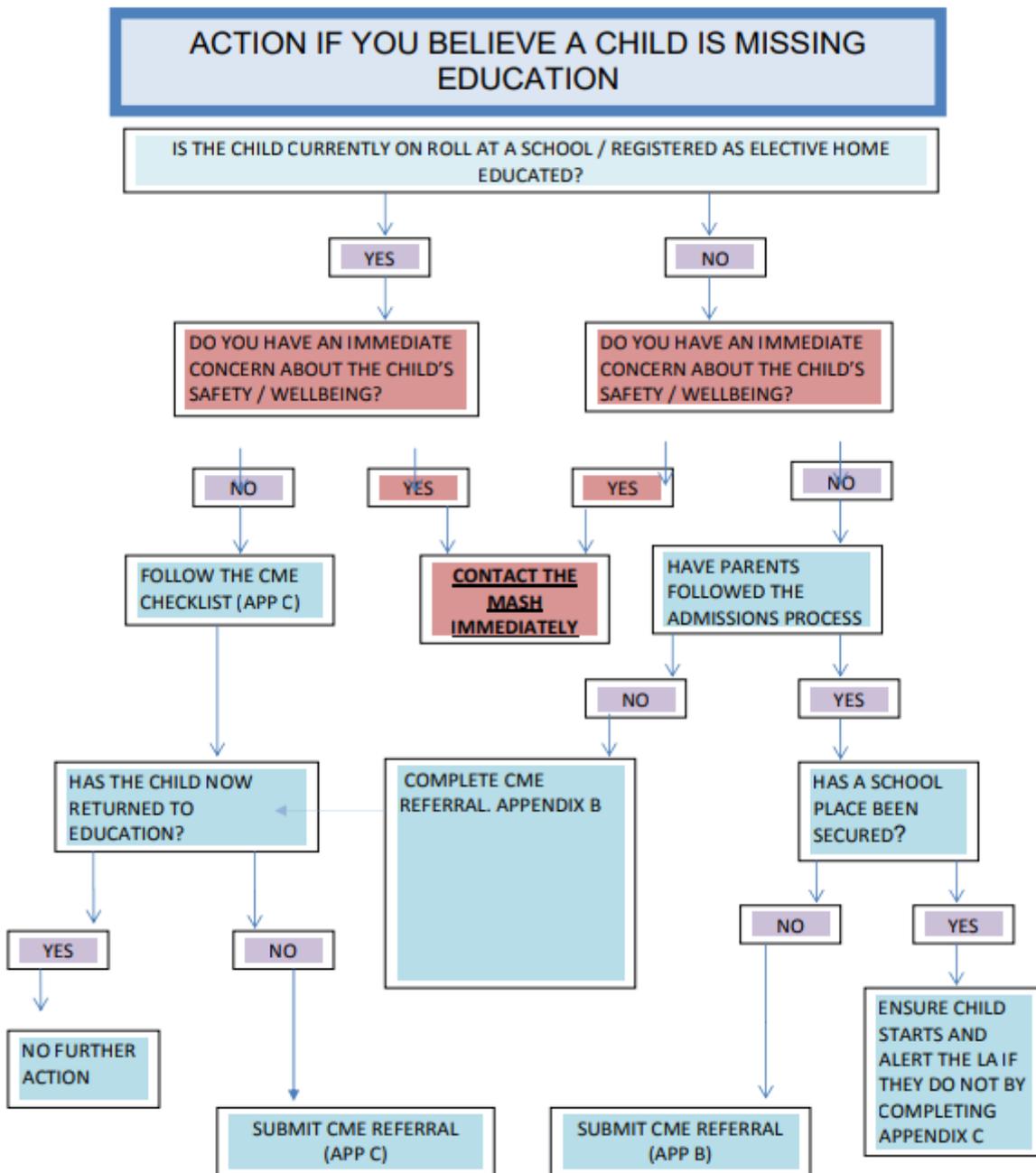
The EWS team, together with the school, must record that they have completed these procedures before deleting them from the register.

Schools cannot remove a pupil from the school roll until reasonable enquiries have been made over a period of at least 4 weeks. If this process has not been followed, schools will be required [by law](#) to reinstate pupils back on their school roll.

Following receipt of a CME referral, if the EWS is able to contact the family via phone and confirm their whereabouts - within a reasonable distance from the school - the case will be referred back to the school as a non-attendance issue and a home visit by EWS will not be necessary.

Essex

The Missing Pupil Checklist is the document used by a school to refer a pupil who is missing from education. If MECES are able to make contact with the family via phone and confirm their whereabouts (which is within a reasonable distance from the school) the case will be referred back to the school as a non-attendance issue and the school may wish to consider referring to MECES for irregular school attendance. If the school have concerns about a pupil's welfare, they should refer for a police welfare check. The role of MECES is not to request police welfare checks where the school has concerns, but to make all necessary checks to attempt to locate the child.



Deletions from a School Roll

The 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations came into force on 1st September 2007. These revoke the 1995 regulations and subsequent amendments of 1997 and 2001, but only in England. Two of the significant changes are regulation 5 and regulation 12.

Regulation 5

Schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend, not, as previously, when they first attend.

Regulation 12

Schools must provide their local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have ten days of continuous unauthorised absence. It also requires schools to inform their local authority of deletions of compulsory school age pupils as soon as they become aware of the circumstances and **before the deletion is made**, and the grounds for deletion;

- The parent/carer has advised in writing that they are withdrawing their child to electively home educate; the school must inform the EWS via their referral processes.
- A pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives or boards within travelling distance of the school;
- The school medical officer has certified that the pupils' health means they will not return to the school before reaching the end of their compulsory school age.
- A pupil has been detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court for a period of not less than 4 months and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to school at the end of that periods (please refer to the guidance on young offenders in section 10); or
- Permanent exclusion (current practices of informing the Senior Access & Inclusion Officer (SAIO) should be continued)

Covid-19 Addendum – School Attendance Policy

School will ensure that:

- Year groups arrive and depart at designated gates at staggered or set times
- Regular communication is available for parent/carers regarding updates to the risk assessment and approach to social distancing whilst on the school site
- Individual risk assessments are completed for pupils previously in the extremely, clinically vulnerable group to enable parent/carers to have confidence in the safety of their child whilst in school
- Support for families is in place from the Trust EWO team for pupil non-attenders
- Provision is in place to help protect wellbeing and mental health of pupils
- They support those pupils suffering with mental ill health, through the provision of an individual support plan to return to school following the national lockdown during the Pandemic
- Provide access to remote education for pupils who are self-isolating, including those who have returned from abroad

Parent/Carer will ensure that they:

- Bring their child to school in a safe and socially distance manner
- Adhere to the drop and collection time given for their child.
- Adhere to the 2m social distancing whilst on school grounds
- Leave the outside area immediately following their child going into class.
- Hand their child-over in an order which will allow social distancing of staff
- Ensure their child remains at home and takes a PCR test when displaying Covid-19 symptoms and that they self-isolate for the ten days should the test be positive. If a child displays Covid-19 symptoms and parents choose for them not to take a PCR test, the child must self-isolate for 10 days.
- Follow the government guidance immediately on the confirmation of a positive case of Covid19
- Adhere to [government travel advice](#) when travelling to and from England and must bear in mind the impact on their child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return.
- Those arriving from a 'red list' country, or have transited through one in the past 10 days, must [quarantine in a government-approved facility](#) with a parent/carer rather than at home.

Exceptional Circumstances

Following the government guidance on Covid-19 the school considers the following to be exceptional circumstances in relation to school attendance:

If someone starts to display symptoms of COVID-19 whilst onsite (continuous cough, temperature or loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell) then they should go home and follow the Government guidance for [NHS test and trace](#).

If a child or a member of their family starts to display symptoms of COVID-19 (continuous cough, temperature or loss or change in their normal sense of taste or smell) then they should stay at home and follow the Government guidance for [NHS test and trace](#). The parent/carer must inform the school as soon as possible and provide evidence if available.

If a member of the immediate family is extremely, clinically vulnerable and it is detrimental for the child to leave the family home. (Medical evidence of this decision must be seen by the school) Work will be provided by the school once evidence has been received.

Punctuality

It is essential that all parent/carers adhere to the drop off and pick up times allocated for their child. Late children should go to the main office and communicate through the intercom, NO parent/carers will be permitted into the building at this stage of the pandemic unless in an emergency.

Children Missing in Education/Home Educating

Whilst parent/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child from school to choose elective home education, we will always draw the parents/carers attention to the responsibilities that this would include such as the Fair Access Protocol.

The Trust EWO will make contact with the parent/carers to discuss their decision and then complete the Elective Home Education Exit form for the Local Authority and inform the school Leadership Team. No child should be removed from roll until the Local Authority advises the school to do so.

Home Visits

- EWOs will only undertake door step visits, under no circumstance will the EWO enter the home during the pandemic
- Door Step visits will only be undertaken if all other communication avenues have been exhausted.
- EWOs will maintain a 2m social distance from the door, parents/carers and pupils.
- EWO will discuss all confidential information via the telephone with parent/carers.
- EWO will only engage with wellbeing discussions on the door step and follow up confidential items with a phone call where required.



Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance was mandatory and the usual rules on attendance applied, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term 2020, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations governing school attendance registers to add a 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)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes

From the beginning of the new academic year 2020, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code C
- Schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows:

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

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 (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. 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 to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19). The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. If in the future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local lockdown

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be

limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19) - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.