

MODIFICATION to Attendance Policy: COVID-19 Addendum



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Ratified by Governors:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. This addendum has been updated to reflect government guidance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) [Schools coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/90122/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance.pdf) [February 2021]
- 1.2. It should be read in conjunction with Priestland's Attendance Policy.
- 1.3. The Department for Education will collect the attendance data recorded from the start of the autumn term and may use it as a school performance measure. It is important that schools follow the guidance closely.
- 1.4. Identified groups of students will not be expected to attend due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19). Parents, students, and schools should not be penalised under these circumstances. The Department for Education has extended the use of the X code for students of statutory age, for this purpose. The X code is discounted in all statistical analyses.

2 Guiding principles

- 2.1. School attendance is mandatory from 8th March 2021. There will be a phased return of students, beginning on 8th March, allowing the school to carry out asymptomatic testing onsite; all year groups will have returned by 12th March. During week beginning 8th March the school will continue to be open to vulnerable students and those who are children of critical workers.
- 2.2. All students are expected to attend school each day and be punctual unless there is a good reason for their absence.
- 2.3. Remote Learning will be provided for any students who are unable to attend school because they are complying with government guidance or legislation.
- 2.4. Parents' legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly has been reinstated.
- 2.5. We will record attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) for all pupils.
- 2.6. We will respond appropriately to any future guidelines from the DfE and Public Health England. The usual rules on school attendance apply, including:
 - parents' duty to secure their child's regular attendance at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age)
 - the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- 2.7. Sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution, in line with the Hampshire's Code of Conduct, can be used again to encourage improved attendance.
- 2.8. **Priestlands School continues to provide reassurance regarding the protective measures taken in schools.** Leaders and governors will ensure that appropriate and effective measures are in place for communicating with parents regarding arrangements for full reopening.
- 2.9. **Staff at Priestlands may need to persuade parents to send their child to school.** It is no longer permissible for parents to choose to keep their children at home due to concerns related to coronavirus (COVID-19). Staff will respond to parental concerns sensitively but will inform parents of their legal duty and explain the protective measures, which have been implemented in school to



keep their child safe. Some students and families are experiencing heightened anxiety about returning to school. This will be for a range of reasons including: previously shielding; households which have had bad experiences of Covid infection; households which have experienced bereavement. We will identify students who are reticent returners and put support in place to reassure all who are concerned.

- 2.10. **The use of new attendance category ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.** During the academic year 2020-2021, the X code will be used for students who cannot attend because their travel to, or attendance at school would be:
- 2.10.1. 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).
 - 2.10.2. prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 2.11. Where students are not attending, extensive efforts will be made to re-engage the student in full-time on-site education. In the interim this absence is unauthorised.

3 Key priorities

3.1. Leaders and governors will:

- 3.1.1. support students and parents in adapting to a *new normal* post-national lockdown and allow a successful return to regular attendance and punctuality for the whole school.
- 3.1.2. maintain a high level of confidence amongst parents and students that the school is a safe place to attend. Articulate clearly the measures put in place to secure the health and safety of students.
- 3.1.3. complete the attendance registers using any revised attendance codes outlined in the addendum for the academic year 2020 -2021.
- 3.1.4. seek assistance of social workers and other external agencies when dealing with children from the vulnerable groups who are not attending.
- 3.1.5. meticulously follow the guidance from Public Health England and the Department for Education.
- 3.1.6. ensure where students are self-isolating, liaison with families is prioritised and highly effective. We ask parents to inform us immediately about the outcome of a test so that we can record absence accurately and advise parents on next steps related to school attendance.
- 3.1.7. If a student is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we will immediately offer them access to remote education. We will keep a record of, and monitor engagement in this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

4 Recording attendance in SIMS



- 4.1. The attendance register will be taken in SIMS using the full range of established attendance codes in the established [non-statutory guidance](#) in addition to the advice outlined below. When coding attendance, attention will be given to DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>
- 4.2. During the week beginning 8th March we will use the Y code for students not expected in school due to the testing programme.
- 4.3. **Code O (unauthorised absence) will be used if the School decides that the reason for absence is not acceptable.** This will include parents who are choosing to keep their children at home because they are anxious about their child contracting coronavirus (COVID-19). By recording unauthorised absence, legal interventions become a consideration for the school, in partnership with the local authority.
- 4.4. **Code X** will be recorded for students who are not attending because of circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19) as follows:
- 4.4.1. **students who are self-isolating due to a member of their household having symptoms or confirmed as having COVID-19.** If the member of the household tests negative, the student can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X will only be used until the time of the test result when the student should return to school. If the member of the household tests positive, the student should continue to self-isolate for the full 10 days from when the member of the household first developed symptoms.
- 4.4.2. **students who have symptoms and are self-isolating before receiving test results.** If a student tests negative, feels well and no longer has the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), the student can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the student remains unwell following a negative test from this date, s/he will be coded with I code (illness). Any X codes used before the test result will not be changed retrospectively. If a student tests positive, s/he will continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of the symptoms, or from the date of the test if asymptomatic. The student should only return to school if s/he does not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X will be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the student tests positive, s/he will be recorded as code I (illness) until s/he is able to return to school.
- 4.4.3. **students who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or have been confirmed as having coronavirus (COVID-19).** Students may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19. The NHS track and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 10 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. In the event of a confirmed 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 10 days from the date on which they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. The X code will be used for the entirety of this self-isolation unless at some stage the student develops symptoms (see guidance above).
- 4.4.4. **students who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine following foreign travel.** As usual, parents should plan their holidays outside of term time. Priestlands School will remind parents of the requirement to quarantine following trips overseas to countries not exempt from quarantine protocols. If a student is required to be in quarantine on their return to the UK, the X code will be used for the quarantine period of 10 days unless at some stage the student develops symptoms (see guidance above).



- 4.4.5. **students who are still deemed to be clinically extremely vulnerable by their doctor and who are advised not to attend school.** We know from growing evidence that children identified at the start of the pandemic as clinically extremely vulnerable [CEV] are not at increased risk of serious outcomes from coronavirus [COVID-19] and children are being removed from the shielding list. For those children remaining on the shielding list the X code will be used until the medical advice changes.
- 4.4.6. **students who are deemed to be clinically extremely vulnerable in the circumstances of a local lockdown scenario and have been advised not to attend school.** All students should return to school unless a medical professional continues to advise against it. Students no longer need to self-isolate to protect family members. However, if in the future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, students still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) living in that area, may be contacted and advised to stay at home and shield. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again which parents can share with school. Priestlands will contact parents of students who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again. Priestlands will set out the expectation that they can return to school. The X code will not be used for any sessions after the student has been advised to return to school.
- 4.4.7. **students who have been asked to stay at home as part of a local lockdown.** If rates of disease rise locally, Priestlands will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on the necessary measures in the event of a local lockdown. Any students asked not to attend school will be X coded.
- 4.5. **Code L and U** will be recorded when a student arrives late both before and after the registers have closed but considering any staggered arrival times, should they have been introduced.

5 Reporting to the Department for Education

- 4.6. Schools are required to submit a daily educational settings status online form to the Department for Education. In addition, school data will be collected via the January 2021 census for the autumn term. This will include attendance codes as well as absence codes for the first time.

6 Review and adaptation

- 5.1. SLT will keep the arrangements detailed in this addendum under review in line with any further government updates.

Ratified by Governors: 18 November 2020 and 20 January 2021

Reviewed, updated and ratified by Governors: 24 March 2021

