

Addendum to Attendance Policy in response to COVID-19 outbreak

1. Context

From 20th March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who absolutely need to attend.

Schools and all childcare providers were also asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

From 1st June, the Government has stated that schools may be able to open to Year Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 if it is satisfied that it has met targets for reducing the number of infections or deaths associated with COVID-19. This addendum sets out temporary measures for attendance during this unprecedented period for schools. The main policy remains unchanged and this addendum will be removed once normal procedures resume. The information in this addendum is adapted from the addendum to the safeguarding policy, also written for the duration of the changes to schools due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

2. Key Contacts with regards to Attendance

Name	Role	Contact Details
Anna Morris	Headteacher	head.nova.p@bristol-schools.uk
Janet Green	Lead Learning Mentor Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Attendance Lead	j.green@novaprimaryschool.co.uk
Kay Crawford	Office manager	nova.p@bristol-schools.uk
Jordan Switalski	Office and Attendance Administrator	nova.p@bristol-schools.uk
Patrick Cummings	Chair of Governors- Safeguarding & Attendance Lead	Chair.nova.p@bristol-schools.uk
Education Welfare Services		Education.welfare@bristol.gov.uk Tel: 01173521438

3. Vulnerable children attendance

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if

necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Eligibility for free school meals in and of itself should not be the determining factor in assessing vulnerability.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support.

Nova Primary School will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

There is an expectation that vulnerable children who have a social worker will attend an education setting, so long as they or a member of family do not have underlying health conditions that put them at risk. In circumstances where a parent does not want to bring their child to an education setting, and their child is considered vulnerable, the social worker and Nova Primary School will explore the reasons for this directly with the parent.

Where parents are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID19, a member of the safeguarding team on duty or the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

Nova Primary School will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend a school, including remotely if needed via our distance learning packages that are available to our other pupils and with support from staff as appropriate.

Nova Primary School may also encourage previous poor attenders to come into school, though this must be balanced with the need for spaces for vulnerable children and key worker children.

Nova Primary School is aware that circumstances for families will change e.g. children will come out of isolation, parents may access employment that makes them critical to the COVID 19 response and it is our intention to remain as flexible as we can to continue to offer a school place and care to those who need it. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if their circumstances do change to discuss their support needs.

4. Attendance monitoring

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, the government have relaxed the law, so that the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is not guilty of an offence on account of the child's failure to attend regularly at the school at which the child is registered (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Local authorities do not need to complete their usual day-to-day attendance processes to follow up on non-attendance for children. Children who do not attend Nova will not be penalised and no penalty notices will be given during this time. However, if parents say their child will be attending, then the school will chase this up with phone calls and texts as it is essential that we safeguard our families and know they are safe and well. Primary and social workers will agree with parents/carers

whether children in need should be attending school –once again, Nova Primary will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not.

Attendance figures will be submitted to the DfE within the daily timescales detailed in their updated attendance guidance. Weekly figures for vulnerable children will be submitted to the local Authority. SIMS is used to record attendance at a school level.

How will this look in our school?

To support the above, Nova Primary School will, when communicating with parents and carers, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues a member of the Safeguarding team on duty will notify their social worker.

What are the register codes? (Taken from A Summary of Department for education Guidance on Attendance 1st June 2020 provided by Bristol City Council)

With effect from 1 June 2020, schools and settings should use the attendance and absence codes in the following sections when completing the attendance register until further notice. The DfE guidance on resuming the attendance register will be reviewed regularly as the situations develops.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

X code - Pupils who are not eligible to attend a session

This includes any pupil who is not in an eligible year group or priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children). This may also include children who are in an eligible year group but are not required in school for a specific session, i.e., year 10 and year 12 pupils who are not among the pupils expected in school at a given time. They should be recorded as code X (not required to be in school). (Temporarily, code X can be used for compulsory school age children – usually it is only used where non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend).

Y code - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as school site, or part of it, is closed)

Although the use of the Y code has been widened due to COVID 19, it may still be appropriate to use it in the usual way if a school needs to fully or partly close during this period, due to exceptional circumstances such as having to close for a deep clean or because of a flood.

Pupils who are eligible to attend a session but do not

This includes children in eligible year groups, children of critical workers and vulnerable children:

i. Y code (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances)

Where a pupil is shielding, self-isolating (see note 1 at the end of this section), or the pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and their risk assessment says that their needs cannot be safely met* in school. (Temporarily, code Y can be used where a pupil is prevented from attending school due to following government guidance on coronavirus). To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation. (*Please note, this relates to pupil's safety in relation to COVID 19 only. Please see part-time timetable guidance below for more information on pupils who may be on part-time timetables due to other reasons.)

ii. I code (illness)

Where a pupil cannot attend school due to illness, as would normally be the case, the pupil should be recorded as illness. To help you to complete the educational setting status form, you should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms

SIMS have amended their coding and asked that I and Y codes are changed to the below:

Absence Reason	DfE Code	Equivalent SIMS Code	Information required for DfE this code provides:
Illness due to Covid-19	I	7	"You should note whether the illness involves coronavirus symptoms."
Self-Isolating due to Covid-19	Y	8	"You should note whether the absence is due to shielding or isolation."
Shielding due to Covid-19		9	

iii. C code (leave of absence authorised by the school)

Where a pupil does not attend school - despite being eligible and is not shielding, self-isolating, unable to attend due to illness, nor has an EHCP risk assessment saying their needs cannot be safely met at school, the pupil should be recorded as code C (leave of absence authorised by the school) where no other authorised absence code is appropriate.

iv. Using other authorised absence and attendance codes

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate, such as code M (medical appointment), schools and settings should use such codes as usual, as it makes it much easier to see a clear picture of the child's attendance absence.

At this time, **all** absence should be classed as **authorised**

v. Pupils who are attending other schools (D and B codes)

Where a pupil is attending:

- another school at which they are registered (for example, a pupil referral unit (PRU)), as would normally be the case, code D (dual registered) should be used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question as they are attending the other school at which they are registered
- a host school on a temporary basis because their home school cannot accommodate them, the pupil will not be registered at the host school. The home school should record the pupil as attending an approved education activity using code B (off-site educational activity) - the host setting does not need to add this child to their attendance register but should keep a record of their attendance for safeguarding purposes and include the child in their daily totals for the educational setting status form – arrangements should be put in place whereby the host setting notifies the home setting of any absences.

Pupils on reduced timetables

Any pupil who is attending school/setting during this partial opening period should be offered the same amount of education as their peers unless there are very exceptional reasons not to do so. If a pupil is offered a reduced timetable, the sessions which are not available to the pupil should be marked as 'C'. Pupils should only be placed on a reduced timetable with the agreement of the Head teacher /Principal, SENDCO and parents/carers and this should be recorded in writing. Reduced timetables should be reviewed on a regular basis. Please see the FAQ section of the 2019 DfE attendance guidance for more information on part-time timetables.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

Staggered start times – taking the register

Normally schools would have the same open and close of register time for a whole cohort of pupils, however, schools may need to use staggered start times to support social distancing. Therefore, schools should take the register for each pupil at the time the pupil is expected to start on any given day. The expected start time should be made clear to the parents/carers, to avoid pupils arriving later than expected and any unnecessary follow up work by the school and to ensure the arrival of pupils on site can be managed effectively.

If a pupil doesn't arrive within an agreed margin of their expected arrival time and the parents/carers have not contacted the school to explain why, the school should follow its first day absence procedures. If the pupil does arrive after the expected arrival time, they should be marked as 'L' with the minutes late (after their expected time) noted on the Management Information System e.g. SIMS in the usual way. The U (late are registers closed) code should not be used, as this is an unauthorised absence.

5. Pupil Tracking

For pupils of statutory school age, schools and other settings are reminded that Pupil Tracking referrals **must** be made to the Local Authority in the usual way if all reasonable enquiries have been followed and the whereabouts of the pupil is not known. For Pupil Tracking Information please follow the link below:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>