

Date ratified at
Directors Full Board
27 August 2020

Review
Resources Committee



THE MAT MISSION STATEMENT

Our family of schools is united in the belief that God's love, peace, truth, and joy is for all. We are dedicated to the achievement of excellence in all we do. We cherish the uniqueness of each of our school communities and celebrate together as one Trust family. By following Jesus' example we bear witness to the greatness of God.

'To think, to feel, to do' Pope Francis

St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
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COVID-19 ADDENDUM TO ATTENDANCE POLICY



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St. John The Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Covid-19 Addendum to Attendance Policy

September 2020

Welcoming Students Back to School:

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development. The impact of time out of school can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore all students need to return to school sooner rather than later.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19).

All schools will follow Public Health advice to minimise Coronavirus (Covid-19) risks as well as DFE advice, LA advice and will keep a Risk Assessment up to date.

Attendance Expectations:

School attendance is mandatory from the beginning of the autumn term 2020.

This means from Sept 2020, the usual rules on school attendance 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.
- The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.
- Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

Pupils who have been shielding or self-isolating:

Government advice is that much more is now known about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so 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 students 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 was paused on 1 August 2020, 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 remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are 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.
- 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 (usually at their next planned clinical appointment).
- Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice the school will offer them access to remote education and will monitor engagement with this activity.

Where children are not able to attend school as they or parents/carers are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised. Supporting evidence of any need to refrain from school will be required in such cases.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school:

We are aware that some parents/carers and children may be reluctant or anxious about returning to school. These may include children 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.

All pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc).

The school will work with families to secure regular school attendance from the start of the autumn term 2020, as this will be essential to help pupils catch up on missed education, make progress and promote their wellbeing and wider development.

Plans can be put in place to support identified students who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement. Teaching, pastoral and support staff will be available to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance, along with outside agency referrals, where required. School staff will continue to work closely with all 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.

Measures for arriving at and leaving school:

In order to keep groups apart and maintain social distancing as they arrive and leave school, schools may make adjustments to starting and finishing times. Such adjustments will not reduce the amount of overall teaching time. A staggered start may, for example, include condensing / staggering free periods or break time but retaining the same amount of teaching time, or keeping the length of the day the same but starting and finishing later to avoid rush hour. Information regarding adjusted timings will be supplied to parents/carers and students

via the schools' normal communication channels, with clear advice regarding the process that has been agreed for drop off and collection.

Parents and students must not gather at the school gates at any time before, during or after the school day.

All schools will follow the latest DFE, PHE and LA guidance and update Risk Assessments regularly.

This includes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>