

The Parkside School

Attendance Policy



Approved by: C Waddams
Chair, BAPD Committee

Date: 18 November 2020

Signed: Due to the pandemic this policy was agreed and ratified virtually on 18 November 2020.

Next review due: Autumn Term 2021

by: Deputy Head

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1. Introduction/Aim

- 1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.
- 1.2 At The Parkside School we believe that regular school attendance enables children both to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. We value the attendance of all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.3 Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils and governors to:
- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
 - Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance;
 - Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences;
 - Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.
- 1.4 We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

2. Legal Framework

- 2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

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A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.2 The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- and, act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

3. Definitions

3.1 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or
- Not attending due to COVID 19 in the following scenarios:
 - Awaiting test results (for the pupil or someone in their household)
 - Self isolation due to COVID 19 symptoms.
 - Self isolation due to positive test
 - Self isolation on advice from tack and trace or Public Health
 - Shielding due to government advice.

3.2 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

“Absence” as:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

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Regular attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised.

An “authorised absence” as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency or unavoidable cause

An “unauthorised absence” as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

“Persistent absenteeism” (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

“Parent” as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At The Parkside School, we believe that improved school attendance is a responsibility shared by governors, school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Name	Contact details
Attendance Lead	John Habershon	01603 441126
Named Governor for Attendance	Catherine Waddams	c/o The Parkside School, College Road, Norwich, NR2 3JA

The Governors of **The Parkside School** will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents;
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters;
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governors' meetings;
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time;
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance;
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site ;
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Senior Management Team at The Parkside School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues;
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with;
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource;

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- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance;
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented;
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated;
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at The Parkside Schools will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents;
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation;
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner;
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions;
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The member of staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The member of staff responsible for attendance will support good attendance, respond to concerns and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data;
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other relevant staff members;
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting good whole school attendance;
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance

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- Managing individual pupil casework files;
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of a Family Support Plan (FSP) and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract;
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to, if a child is absent from school without contact from parents;
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

The Parkside School requests that parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible;
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours;
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their school work or home and family life;
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home;
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance;
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

5. Categorising Absence and Attendance

5.1 The table at Appendix 1 of this policy outlines the national codes which enable all schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and comply with the regulations and Department for Education advice¹. When marking our registers, we will apply these codes to accurately record and report attendance.

5.2 Leave of Absence

5.2.1 Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Head Teachers can no longer authorise leave of absence for the sole

¹ ['School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', DfE \(August 2020\)](#)

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purpose of a holiday (unless in exceptional circumstances). All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution. At Parkside we acknowledge that exceptional circumstances can be in relation to specific SEN needs meaning holidays in quieter times i.e. not school holidays may be in the pupils best interests.

5.2.2 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances.' At The Parkside School, leave of absence shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This may only be granted at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The Parkside School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

5.2.3 Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Head Teacher at least a month before the planned leave. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Head Teacher and it will be marked as unauthorised. The Parkside School will treat each application individually and discuss with parents/carers the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

5.2.4 A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fail to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave
- An application for a leave of absence is not agreed by the Head Teacher but is still taken
- A longer period is taken in excess of the agreed number of days.

5.2.5 When absence is granted by the Head Teacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible 'Children Missing from Education' procedures being instigated.

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5.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

5.3.1 Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that a parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

5.3.2 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5.3.3 Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.²

5.3.4 Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

5.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

The Parkside School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

² This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)

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5.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time The Parkside School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended The Parkside School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at The Parkside School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

5.6 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

6. Attendance Protocols

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

At Parkside School we use the school MIS system to record attendance. Registers are taken by 9:30 am in the morning and 1:45pm in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure this is completed.

In the event of staff being unable to access the online system a written register will be completed.

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At The Parkside School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at **9am**. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken by 9.15am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign the late book and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before **9.30am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9.30**. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

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Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

Covid amendment: We have staggered the start and end times of the day. Pupils will be able to arrive between 8.30-9.00am and collected between 3-3.30pm.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:30am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission

In certain circumstances the School may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the

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Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

6.4 Attendance Procedure and Reward System

Attendance data is discussed at the minuted weekly safeguarding meeting.

- **96% - 90%the school monitors this closely and may make verbal contact with parents and an initial letter outlining the concern.**
- **Under 90% more formalised procedures start including attendance letters, early intervention meeting and fast track (see Appendix 1 for information).**

At The Parkside School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

6.5 Support Systems

At The Parkside School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- **Social stories**
- **regular contact with parents**
- **transitional object**
- **reintegration support packages**
- **attendance panels**
- **parenting contracts**
- **engaging the support of other agencies**

In order to plan the correct support, we may invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

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6.6 Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason. Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days). Absence at this level is likely to be causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support. If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3 month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

6.7 Reduced timetables

All schools, academies and free schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a reduced timetable for a time-limited period to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so. A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate.

In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all reduced timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

7. Deletions from the Register

7.1 At The Parkside School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At The Parkside School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school

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and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

7.2 We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

7.3 If a child is being removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school and the local authority have given permission for this to happen. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above. We will also inform Norfolk County Council's Services to Home Educators Team by completing a referral form.

7.4 The Parkside School will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, and the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

8. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- exclusion
- teaching and learning

9. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- **School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, DfE (August 2020)**
- **School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)**
- **Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE (September 2020)**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE (2018)**

10. Appendices

10.1 The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council Fast Track to Attendance Meetings Information for families

Helping to improve attendance, achievement, and enjoyment at school

We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people receive a good education and we know that full school attendance is vital to ensure that they can achieve their full potential. This is underpinned by our vision for all children and young people of Norfolk:

'We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy, and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and have high aspirations for their future'.

What does the law say?

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on all parents to ensure that their children receive an efficient, full-time education. Parents who are seen to fail in their duty can be brought before the Magistrates Court. In Education law, a parent is defined as:

- The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not.
- Anyone who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. This can include parents therefore with whom the child does not normally live with or wider family members who share day to day care of the child.

Types of Absence

Absence can be **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absence can be **authorised** by the school if one of the following four circumstances apply:

1. Sickness or unavoidable cause (an unavoidable cause relating to the child, not the parent)
2. Leave of absence (granted by the Headteacher)
3. Day of religious observance (for the religion followed by the parents)
4. The child is entitled to Local Education Authority provided transport to school and this is not being provided.

For long or frequent periods of sickness absence, it is likely that your child's school will require you to provide medical evidence to authorise the absence and may ask you to give them permission to contact your child's GP.

A school may also agree to authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances. This will be the decision of the Head Teacher or Principal.

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An **unauthorised** absence is any absence for which the school has not given permission or where the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence which is acceptable to the school. This includes un-agreed holidays during term time.

What is the purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with school and relevant agency members to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered. A supportive action plan will be agreed and an attendance target will be set.

Whilst the intention of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is that attendance will improve, consideration will be made to legal action if attendance targets are not met. This could include prosecution in the magistrates' court.

What happens next?

A Review Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged and at this meeting the action plan and attendance will be reviewed. A new action plan will be agreed. If the attendance target is met, the Review Panel can recommend that no further action is required.

However, the school will continue to monitor the attendance of your child and will notify the Local Education Authority if attendance deteriorates. This could still result in legal action being taken. If the attendance target is not met, the Review Panel will recommend to the Local Education Authority that legal action is taken.

If you are having difficulties with your child's attendance, please speak to their school.

If you have any queries regarding this leaflet please contact your child's school in the first instance.

Appendix 2: Department for Education Attendance & Absence Codes

Absence and Attendance Codes	
Present at School	
/ \	Registration code / \ : present in school / = am \ =pm
L	Late arrival before the register has closed. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.
Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity	
B	Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment. This code should be used to record time spent in

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interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

P Participating in a supervised sporting activity. This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

V Educational visit or trip. This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

W Work experience. Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school

C Leave of absence authorised by the school. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

E Excluded but no alternative provision made. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

H Holiday authorised by the school. Head Teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion.

I Illness (not medical or dental appointments). Schools should advise

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parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

M Medical or dental appointments. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

R Religious observance. Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

S Study leave. Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence. A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is

expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

- G** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head Teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
- N** Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).
- O** Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
- U** Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

- X** Not required to be in school. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this policy addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X in circumstances related to coronavirus.

- Y** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

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- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because the pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

Appendix 3: Fixed penalty notice whole school warning letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At The Parkside School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, 'Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion'.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the Headteacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the Headteacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks.

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at The Parkside School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the

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notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Appendix 4: Letters to Parents/Carers about their child's absence, attendance and punctuality

Letter 1 – Concerns about a pupil's high level of absence

Use this letter in situations where a pupil's absence has been authorised, but absence levels are still high.

For example:

- A pupil is regularly ill, but doesn't have an identified medical need
- Combined circumstances (such as a family bereavement and pupil illness) means the pupil has missed a lot of lesson time

Dear

Absences from School

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 95% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact the school if you require support with this.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 2 – Concerns about a pupil's unauthorised absence(s)

Use this letter as the first step to address unauthorised absence.

Dear

Unauthorised Absences from School

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent unauthorised [absence/absences] from school.

[Name] has been absent from school for a total of [number] unauthorised sessions ([number] days) on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Amend the line below based on your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices:

Unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has more than [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. More information about penalty notices is available in the school's attendance policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website, or available from the school office.

I therefore request that you contact the school office on 01603 441126 as soon as you can to discuss this.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 3 – Formal notice about unauthorised absence

Use this letter if:

You have previously tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absence
The pupil's unauthorised absence has reached the threshold set by your local authority for the use of a penalty notice

Dear

Unauthorised Absence

With reference to our letter dated [date], [name] has now had a total of [number] unauthorised absences within [time period]. These absences occurred on the following dates:

[date]

[date]

[date]

In line with our attendance policy, and the local authority's code of practice, we'll now request a penalty notice be issued by the local authority.

On receipt of the notice, you must pay:

£60, if paid within 21 days

£120, if paid between 21 and 28 days from the date of the notice

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action.

We would also like to invite you in for a meeting with [appropriate member of staff], to discuss how we can support you to help improve [name's] attendance.

Please contact the school office on 01603 441126 urgently to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 4 – Accepting a request for a holiday in term-time

Dear

Unauthorised Absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request.

I haven't made this decision lightly. Our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

Each request for a holiday absence is considered on its merits at the time. Please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 5 – Declining a request for a holiday in term-time

Dear

Your Request for a Holiday Absence

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school between [date] and [date].

In this case I regret I cannot consent to your request.

Our school, while acknowledging that each family's circumstances are different, is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration.

Because each request is unique, my decision in this instance cannot be directly compared with decisions made by the school in the past, and nor does it set a precedent. It does not mean I'll not agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

I'm sorry to have to disappoint you.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 6 – After an unauthorised holiday

Dear

Holiday Absence

I'm writing about your action in taking [name(s)] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date].

We're treating this as an unauthorised holiday because [explain the evidence you have].

Our school works with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We expect you to consult the school before booking holidays that mean your child will be absent, or before making any plans that will involve your child's absence from lessons or other commitments.

If in line with your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices, add:

We have the power to request that the local authority issue a penalty notice for unauthorised term-time holidays.

If issued with a penalty notice, you must pay:

£60, if paid within 21 days of receiving the notice

£120, if paid after 21 days, but before 28 days

If you don't pay the penalty within 28 days, the local authority could pursue legal action.

Continue with:

Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on [name(s)] education. We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this further. Please contact the school office urgently on 01603 441126.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 7 – Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Dear

Your Request for Absence for Religious Observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion].

In this case, I'm prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence.

Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity. However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent, and does not necessarily mean I'll agree to a similar request, from you or other parents, in the future.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Letter 8 – Concern about punctuality

Dear

Poor Punctuality

I'm writing to you because [name] has been late to school [number] times in [timeframe].

[He/she] arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

[date]
[date]
[date]

[He/she] also arrived at school late (but before the register had closed) on the following dates:

[date]
[date]
[date]

The school day begins promptly at [time] and registration closes at [time].
Afternoon registration takes place between [time slot].

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child doesn't miss work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

Amend the following sentence in line with your local authority's code of conduct for penalty notices:

Persistent lateness can result in a penalty notice. The school can request that the local authority issues a penalty notice related to lateness when:

[conditions set out in your local authority's code of practice]

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We're committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can work with you to help improve [name's] punctuality.

Please contact the school office on 01603 441126 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

C Ellis-Gage
Head Teacher

Appendix 5: Example Leave of Absence Request Form

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Important Information for Parents</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head Teachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013 which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Head Teacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not ▪ Head Teachers may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply ▪ If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised ▪ Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed ▪ If leave of absence is granted, please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress ▪ This form MUST be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time ▪ Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised <p>Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.</p>
<p>I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:</p> <p>Full name of child/ren.....</p> <p>Address.....</p> <p>From (1st day of absence)To (last day of absence)</p> <p>Total number of school days.....Expected date of return to school.....</p> <p>Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:</p>
<p>Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:</p> <p><i>I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.</i></p> <p>Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):.....</p> <p>Date:.....</p>
<p>Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been:</p> <p>Agreed <input type="checkbox"/> Days agreed <input type="checkbox"/> Not agreed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Signature of Head Teacher:.....</p>

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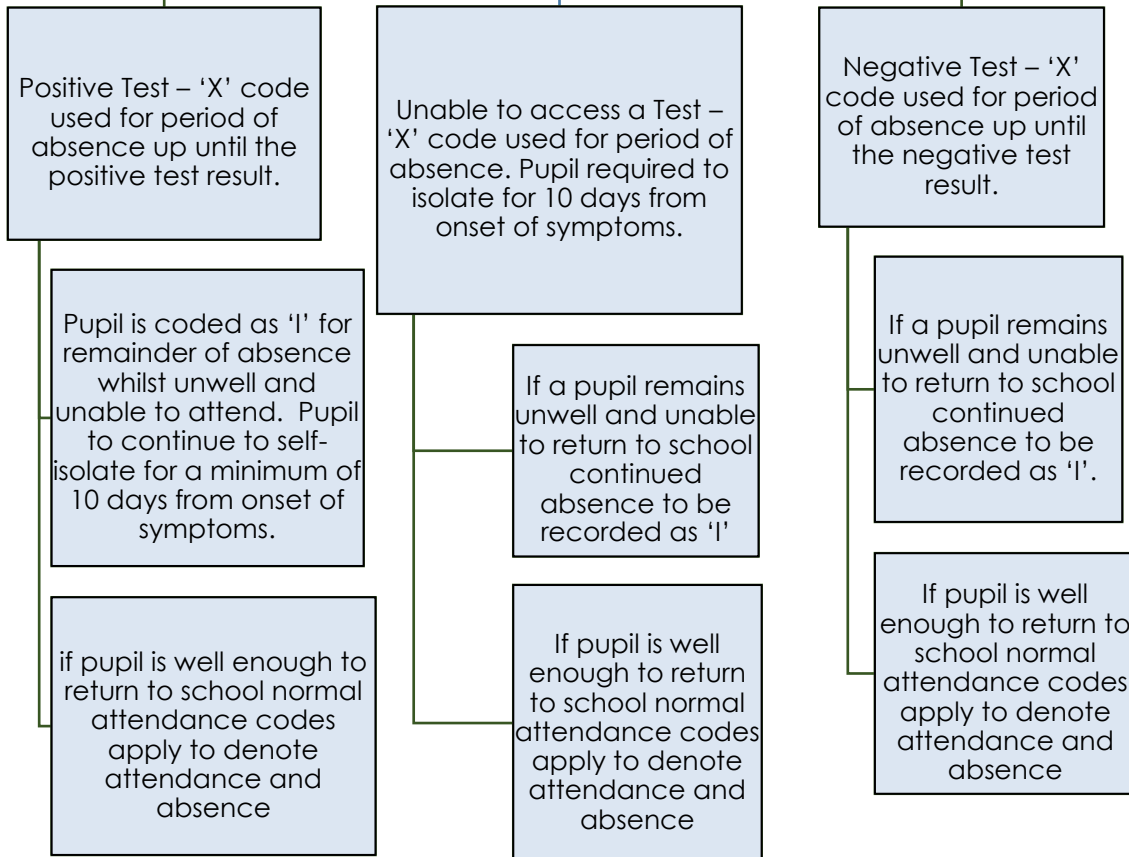
11.4 Recording absence related to Covid-19 during academic year 2020 to 2021
 Although school attendance is compulsory from the start of the autumn term, there will be some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. Parents will not be penalised for a child's absence due to following Covid-19 guidance.

The table below shows the national codes which all schools are required to use to record and monitor attendance and absence when absence is related to Covid-19:

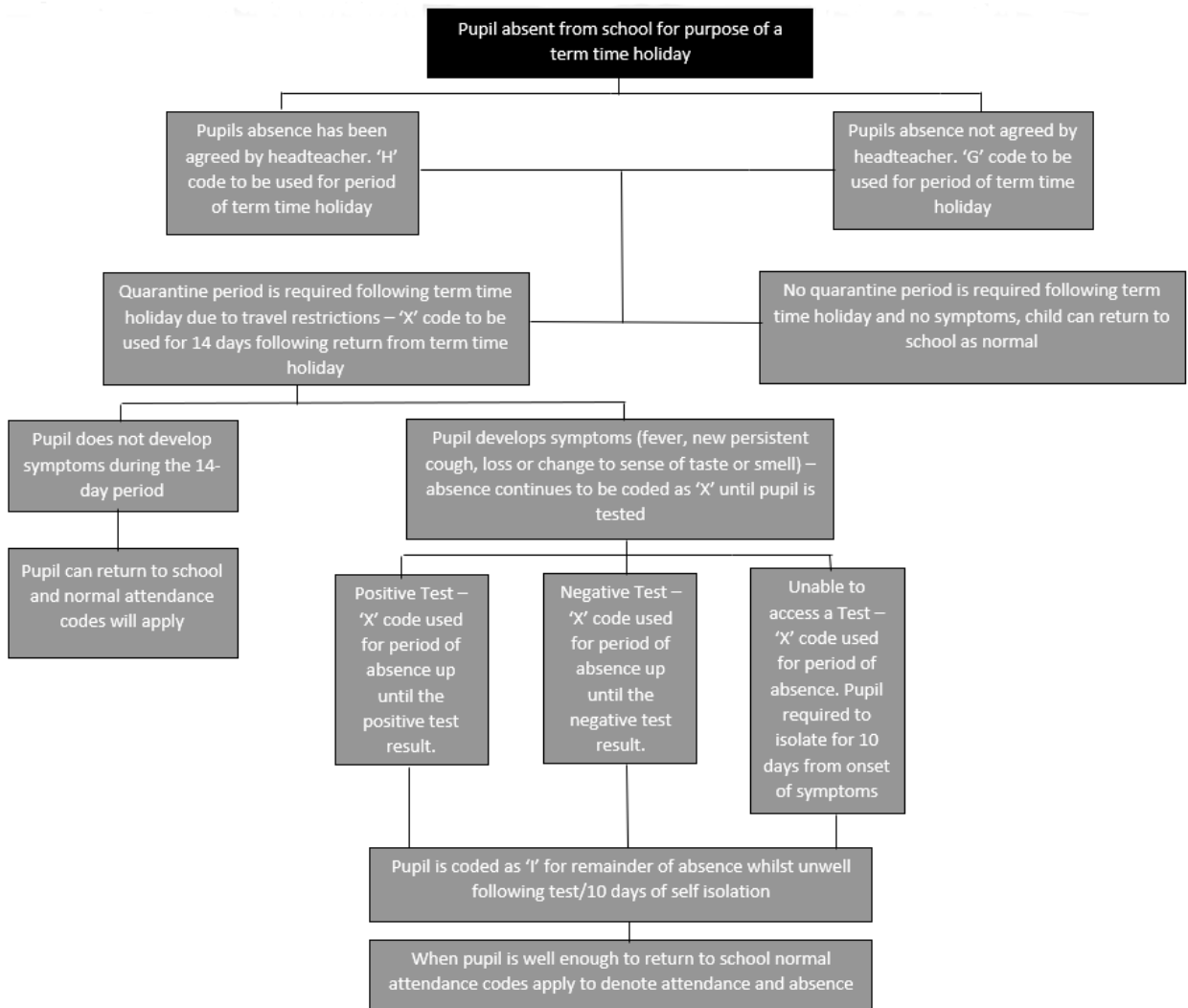
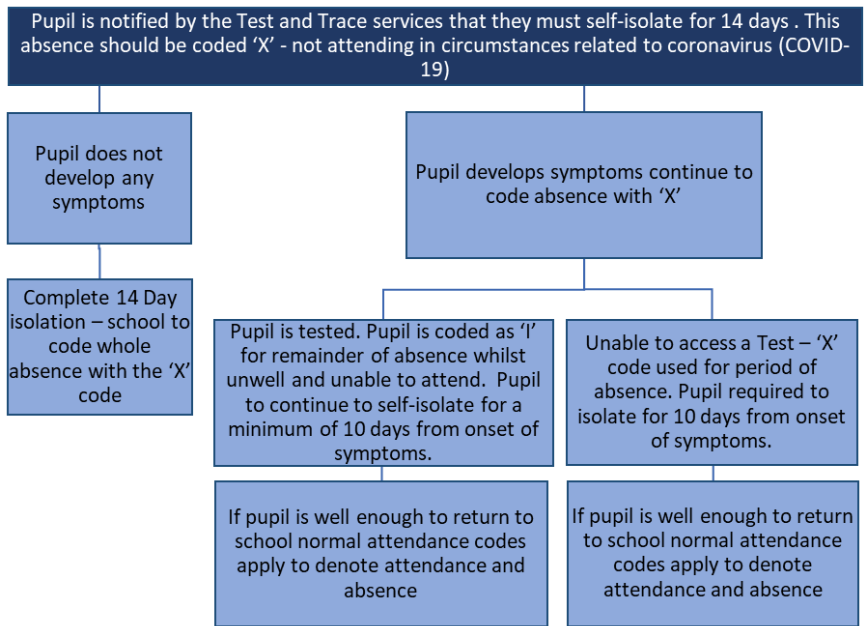
Code	Reason
X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ absence accrued when pupils are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (Covid-19) ▪ If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register ▪ Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
I	Absence accrued following a positive test should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

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Pupil develops symptoms (fever, new persistent cough, loss or change to sense of taste or smell). Household must isolate and get child tested. This absence should be coded 'X' - not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)



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11.5 Self-Isolation

We ask that all parents and carers follow the Government guidance '**Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection**' if their child and/or someone in the household develops symptoms of Covid-19.

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.

In all cases of self-isolation, parents must inform the school immediately about the outcome of a test. In line with Department for Education guidance, we will not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

11.6 Continuity of Learning

See letter regarding remote learning if a pupil is unable to attend school due to COVID 19

Addendum: Arrangements for Attendance during Covid-19

10 November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Coronavirus cases are rising in Norwich and across Norfolk and we know that this is a worrying time for our school community.

We've already put in lots of measures in accordance with the latest Department for Education guidelines to keep pupils safe, including grouping staff and pupils, keeping distance between groups and doing extra cleaning and disinfection. We are also in close contact with Public Health and the Local Outbreak Management Team to make sure that we have all the necessary Covid-19 measures in place.

School is the best place for children and young people to learn, build their confidence and support their wellbeing and development. The rise in cases means that it is more important than ever that we all work together to follow the guidelines and make sure we keep each other and our school safe.

If you need information about what to do if you, your child or someone else in your household has symptoms, is a close contact or has been told to isolate then please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

You can also find helpful information for your family at www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/test-trace

We know you will wish to protect family, friends and our community by self-isolating if told to. Isolating is such an important part of controlling COVID. Please remember it is a legal requirement to isolate if you have tested positive or have been told to do so. If you are asked to isolate at any point and are worried for any reason, help and support is available by contacting 0344 800 8020, this includes financial support and help accessing food and medicine.

Finally, there are things that we can all do to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Wash your hands regularly – for 20 seconds, with soap and running water, especially before and after school.

Wear a **face covering** in public places, including shops and public transport and when picking up or dropping off your child from school.

Create space – stay two metres apart from people who are not from your household in public places. Please do not stay and chat at the school gates at

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drop-off and pick-up times. **Remember to keep a safe distance from other people outside your household or your child's bubble group.**

Thank you for playing your part in tackling this virus and keeping your family and friends, the school and the community safe from Coronavirus.

Yours faithfully

CAROLYN ELLIS-GAGE, Head Teacher