

Attendance

As a school we are really looking forward to welcoming all our students back in September, however we know many families may have questions regarding attendance, therefore we wanted to take this opportunity to advise you of the new protocols for the autumn term.

Government guidance asserts that 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, particularly for disadvantaged children, and that this impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn and therefore we need to ensure all students can return to school sooner rather than later.

Below is information and guidance for parents/carers, in relation to attendance expectations and absence procedures for the new academic year 2020-21.

Attendance Expectations

It is again, from September, a parent's duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered student at school and they are of compulsory school age.

It will be the responsibility of the school to record attendance and follow up any absences.

The school will return to following our published attendance policy for non-attendance, including referral to the Education Welfare Service for prosecution where continued attendance issues persist.

Shielding

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1st August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission. This means that even the small number of students who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. As a school, however we appreciate the anxieties that this may bring to some young people, who up until this point have been shielding. We will therefore be sending out a survey to all parents in August to gather additional information from you regarding this.

If rates of transmission rise in the area, some students and family members may be asked to shield again during the autumn term. Should this be the case, we will contact parents at the time to request additional information regarding shielding.

Some students 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. Where a student is unable to attend because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, the school will offer them access to remote education, as we have done during the partial school closures this academic year. Engagement with remote education, where required, will be closely monitored by the student's class teachers.

Self-Isolation & Testing

Where a student is self-isolating because they have symptoms or have had a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has Covid-19, absence will not be penalised.

Ensuring that students do not come into school if they have Covid-19 symptoms or have tested positive in the last 10 days is of the upmost importance. Therefore a student should not be sent into school if they meet either of these criteria. If a student develops symptoms during the school day, they will be isolated and we will request that parents/carers collect them immediately.

As part of the NHS Test and Trace process, we have been asked to ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the need to book a test if you or anyone in your household develops symptoms and to follow up to date self-isolation guidance. Following receipt of the test results, please inform school immediately of these results, positive or negative, so that we can advise of the next steps that you and the school need to take.

If a student or member of their household develops symptoms, tests positive for Covid-19 or is contacted by Test & Trace, please ensure that the school is informed as soon as possible on the school's absence reporting line (01482 631208 (opt. 1 for Y7-11 / opt. 2 for sixth form)). There is clear Public Health England guidance for us to follow in each instance, so a member of our team will get in contact with you. In each instance, please do not send your son/daughter to school without speaking to a member of our team first.

Students and families who are anxious about the reopening of school

As a school, we have full confidence in the measures (outlined in other communications from our Headteacher and CEO) we have put in place to mitigate the risk of transmission, and keep our students safe.

As always, we are listening to potential concerns of students, parents and families who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and we will endeavour to put the right support in place to address these. As guidelines suggest this may include students who have been previously shielding themselves, those with previously shielding family members, or those concerned about their comparatively increased risk from COVID 19, including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain pre-existing conditions which put them at potentially higher risk. We will therefore be sending out a survey to all parents in August to gather additional information from you, should you fall into one of these groups.

Absence Reporting

Please continue to use the school's absence line (01482 631208 (opt. 1 for Y7-11 / opt. 2 for sixth form)) should your child be absent from school for any reason, clearly stating the reason why.

If your child is absent due to illness, please be specific about their illness and if your child is displaying any of the Covid-19 symptoms, please state this when you contact the school as well as when your child started with symptoms. As a school, we are responsible for liaising with Public Health England for any confirmed cases within the school population, therefore communication between parents/carers and school is vital in reducing transmission.

A reminder of the symptoms

- *A high temperature* - this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- *A new, continuous cough* – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- *A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste* – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If you or your son/daughter have any concerns or questions regarding attendance for the upcoming academic year, then please contact Tom Sergeant, Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding & Inclusion (Thomas.sergeant@southhunsley.org.uk).