

Nottingham City Council
Education Welfare & EOTAS Service
COVID 19 Pandemic – Return to School
8th March 2021

All schools are due to reopen to all pupils on 8th March 2021, albeit some may be on a staggered basis. Regular attendance at school is expected for all pupils DfE guidance is reviewed and regularly updated. Such updates are available on the EWS web page.

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/education-and-schools/education-welfare-eotas-service/>

School Attendance

The duty on all parents to secure their child's attendance regularly at school (where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age) is reinstated.

Requests for service

It is expected that schools will record attendance and follow up absence as usual, taking account of any impact that COVID-19 has had on the child/family; with signposting to support services where necessary; prior to making a request for service. Parents will need to demonstrate that they have followed through.

There will need to be demonstrable evidence to explain the support given by the school and any LA support services prior to the commencement of any legal proceedings. This will be something the Courts, (with any cases that end up there), will be keen to see.

Unauthorised Absence

The Education Welfare and Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Service are available to answer all attendance related queries by email: admin.educationwelfare@nottinghamcity.gov.uk and telephone: 0115 8762965

Pupils with 10 unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks and children who are persistently absent (10%) unauthorised absence should be referred to the EW & EOTAS Service in the usual way.

Here is the link to the online referral form.
https://myaccount.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/service/education_welfare_service

Unauthorised leave of absence - Penalty Notices

Prior to requesting a PN, schools should be satisfied that they can evidence the following:

1. The leave of absence was not as a result of a date-change due to the pandemic. Parents need to be able to show that was the only date that they could go
2. The key worker has provided evidence that they can only take the leave at that specific time
3. Any requested leave of absence is considered in line with the Government's road map

Protecting clinically extremely vulnerable people from COVID-19

All shielding will cease at the end of March 2021. Schools will be aware that some families will be reluctant to send their children back to school as an adult within their household is shielding until then. Although the shielding does not apply to children and young people, schools have to consider the impact and anxiety that the pandemic has caused.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Sanctions

Courts slots are likely to be reduced as they work through their backlog, so schools need to be aware of any potential legal delays.

Remote Learning

Attendance will be mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age from 8 March. Schools affected by the [Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction](#) are still required to provide remote education to pupils covered by the direction where their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes, for example, where such guidance means that a class, group or small number of pupils need to self-isolate or that clinically extremely vulnerable children are to shield. All such pupils not physically unwell should have access to remote education as soon as reasonably practicable, which may be the next school day.

Where secondary schools are operating a phased return of pupils in the week commencing 8 March to allow for testing that week, we expect schools to provide remote education for all pupils not yet expected to attend on-site.

Absence from School

Vulnerable children and young people with a Child Protection Plan (CP), Child In Need Plan (CIN), Child Looked After (LAC), Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who are absent for 3 consecutive days must be brought to the attention of their social worker or SEND Officer. It is vital that absences of vulnerable children are addressed without delay to ensure they are able to meet their educational needs and also to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Special Educational Needs Service – 0115 876 4300

Nottingham City Council Childrens Safeguarding

Children & Families Direct:

Telephone: 0115 876 4800

Email: candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Anxiety Related Absence due to COVID-19

COVID19 has brought with it a lot of uncertainty and many families will be experiencing heightened levels of anxiety about their children being in school.

Nottingham City Council wants to support all of our children and young people with attending school. Targeted CAMHS, Mental Health Support Teams and Educational Psychology are working together to deliver a campaign of support to parents, children and young people. The aim is to relieve some of the anxiety people may be experiencing around returning to school. # Nottingham You've Been Missed <https://www.asklion.co.uk/kb5/nottingham/directory/advice.page?id=tJqH1UfDQDE> has a wealth of resources available.

The DfE have also produced some useful Return to School leaflets **See-Hear-Respond** delivered by www.barnardos.org.uk/
Visit the <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub>

N.B. It is vital that any child/young person with a social worker who is not attending school due to child and/or parent anxiety should always be reported to the child's social worker as a priority.

Safeguarding

Schools must follow their own safeguarding practices should they have safeguarding concerns. Immediate safeguarding concerns must be submitted to C & F Direct <http://www.nottinghamchildrenspartnership.co.uk/children-families-direct/>
Safeguarding consultations are also available.

Further advice is available from the Education Welfare & EOTAS Service, 0115 8762965 or email admin.educationwelfare@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Elective Home Education

Nationally and locally, there has been an increase in the number of parents requesting elective home education (EHE). All EHE enquiries should be directed to the EW & EOTAS Service. Cases will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer who will make contact with the parent to give further advice and guidance. They will offer a meeting with the parent and school. This is known as the '3 way meeting' to explain the responsibility of providing a suitable education suitable to the age, ability and aptitudes of the child, and any special educational needs. Government publications are available for reference <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

Children Missing Education

If school are concerned about the absence of a child and young person who is not classified as vulnerable, and who school have been unable to make contact with, a referral should be made to the EW & EOTAS Service.

If you are not able to contact a family who may not be residing at their last known address, a referral must be made to the EW & EOTAS Service as a Children Missing Education (CME) CME.educationwelfare@nottinghamcity.gov.uk