



Pebworth First and Blackminster Middle Schools
Federation



Attendance Policy

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| Review date: | September 2022 |
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| Approved by: | Governing Body |
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Aims

To raise achievement and enhance progress by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Objectives

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance and punctuality.
- To inform parents/carers and students of attendance issues.
- To ensure parents/students are aware of the implications of poor attendance.
- To identify non-attendance and liaise and support with families.
- To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the whole school.

The Law

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Parent/carers legal responsibilities

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age are in receipt of a full-time education. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children regularly attend at the school at which they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act.

Guiding Principles

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to improve attendance and punctuality and staff will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.

All non-attendance will be investigated by the school.

The percentage attendance rates for both schools are published in newsletters and shared through assemblies, on the websites and verbally with students – attendance is an ongoing conversation at our schools.

Procedures

Attendance register

The school register is a formal, legal document and is taken by staff twice a day - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Class Teachers and Tutors are expected to complete registers electronically.

The register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for details of the codes used on the registers to record this.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Registration at Blackminster

Morning 0825 - 0835

Afternoon 1340 - 1410

Students arriving after 0835 but before 0900 will be marked as 'L' - LATE.

Students arriving after 0900 will be marked 'U' - UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.

Should a student arrive late they MUST register directly with the school office.

Students who regularly arrive late or without any reasonable explanation will attend a lunchtime detention.

The Attendance Officer will send letters home to the parents/carers of those students who regularly arrive late.

Registration at Pebworth

Morning 0855 - 9.10

Afternoon 1300 – 1305

Students arriving after 0910 but before 0930 will be marked as 'L' - LATE.

Students arriving after 0930 will be marked 'U' - UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.

Should a student arrive late they MUST register directly with the school office.

School will send letters home to the parents/carers of those students who regularly arrive late.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.10am or as soon as practically possible. Reporting absence should be done by telephone to Blackminster on 01386 830311 or Pebworth on 01789 720726.

A First Morning Call will be completed by the school on a daily basis for all children who are absent and where no explanation has been received. We have a duty to ensure the safety of all children as well as their regular school attendance.

Absence due to illness will be recorded as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers should notify school as soon as possible when the appointment is arranged, by telephone or email. The Pebworth First and Blackminster Middle School Federation may request an appointment letter to confirm these appointments.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (see appendix 1).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent for that session, using the appropriate code and signed in manually.

Where a pupil is consistently late, senior leaders may write to parents and request to meet with them in order to explore the reasons for this and investigate the support which can be put in place to overcome this.

Reporting to parents

A copy of each pupils attendance record is sent home once per term. Additional celebration and warning/reminder letters may be sent where a pupils attendance is excellent or recognised as a concern by attendance officers and senior leaders.

Home/School Partnership

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Inform the school on each and every occasion of absence.
- Where possible, arrange medical/dental appointments outside school hours. NB where appointments are unavoidable, please provide the school with medical evidence in advance.
- Respond promptly to any attendance related correspondence. If no satisfactory explanation is given for absence then the absence is unauthorised.
- Should a student experience any difficulties in terms of attendance or punctuality, the school will work with the family to overcome these.
- Parents will be kept informed about their child's attendance and punctuality. This will be recorded on reports.
- Ensure good links with parents are maintained, enlisting their partnership in achieving good attendance and punctuality.
- If students are absent from class, or seen off site, then the attendance officer/school leader will be notified and a phone call made.
- Where attendance continues to be of concern, school will make phone calls home, send letters, arrange meetings with parents or make home visits. Penalty notices or prosecution may result if there is no improvement in attendance.

Student responsibilities

- Attend regularly, equipped and dressed appropriately.
- Arrive on time to lessons, ready to learn
- Tell teachers if there is a problem that may lead to absence.

Absence

Persistent Absence

Persistent Absence is when a pupil's attendance is below 90% or falls below 95% over a 4 week period. In either case, parents will be contacted and informed that there is cause for concern.

Long Term Absence

Long Term Absence is when a student is absent for a sustained period of more than 2 weeks. This may be for authorised or unauthorised reasons. The Headteacher's decision is final in relation to authorising any and all absence.

Request for Exceptional Leave in Term Time

Pebworth First School and Blackminster Middle School do not authorise leave taken during term time, unless in exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Exceptional circumstances may include (but are not limited to) family illness/bereavement, religious observances and a parent or carer being a serving member of the armed forces or emergency services. Parents may make a request for Exceptional Leave but this must be made a minimum of 6 weeks in

advance. Every application will be assessed on a case by case basis and a written response will be issued to the parent/carer.

If the school chooses to authorise the absences we will support the student with any catch-up of missed work. If the school chooses NOT to authorise the absence, there is no legal obligation for the school to provide work.

It should be emphasised that it is the student's responsibility to catch up on work missed, but that staff should aim to make the process less demanding. Staff will clearly target the work that needs to be caught up, identify appropriate websites and study guides for individual research, e.g. www.mymaths.co.uk, Education City and ShowMyHomework

If unauthorised leave of absence is taken it may lead to the parent being issued with a Penalty Notice.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Unplanned Absence section above).

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 97%, we may contact parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. We will put in place an attendance action plan to support families and pupils in improving their attendance in these circumstances.

The attendance process at Blackminster can be found in appendix 2 and at Pebworth in appendix 3.

Appendix 1: Register codes

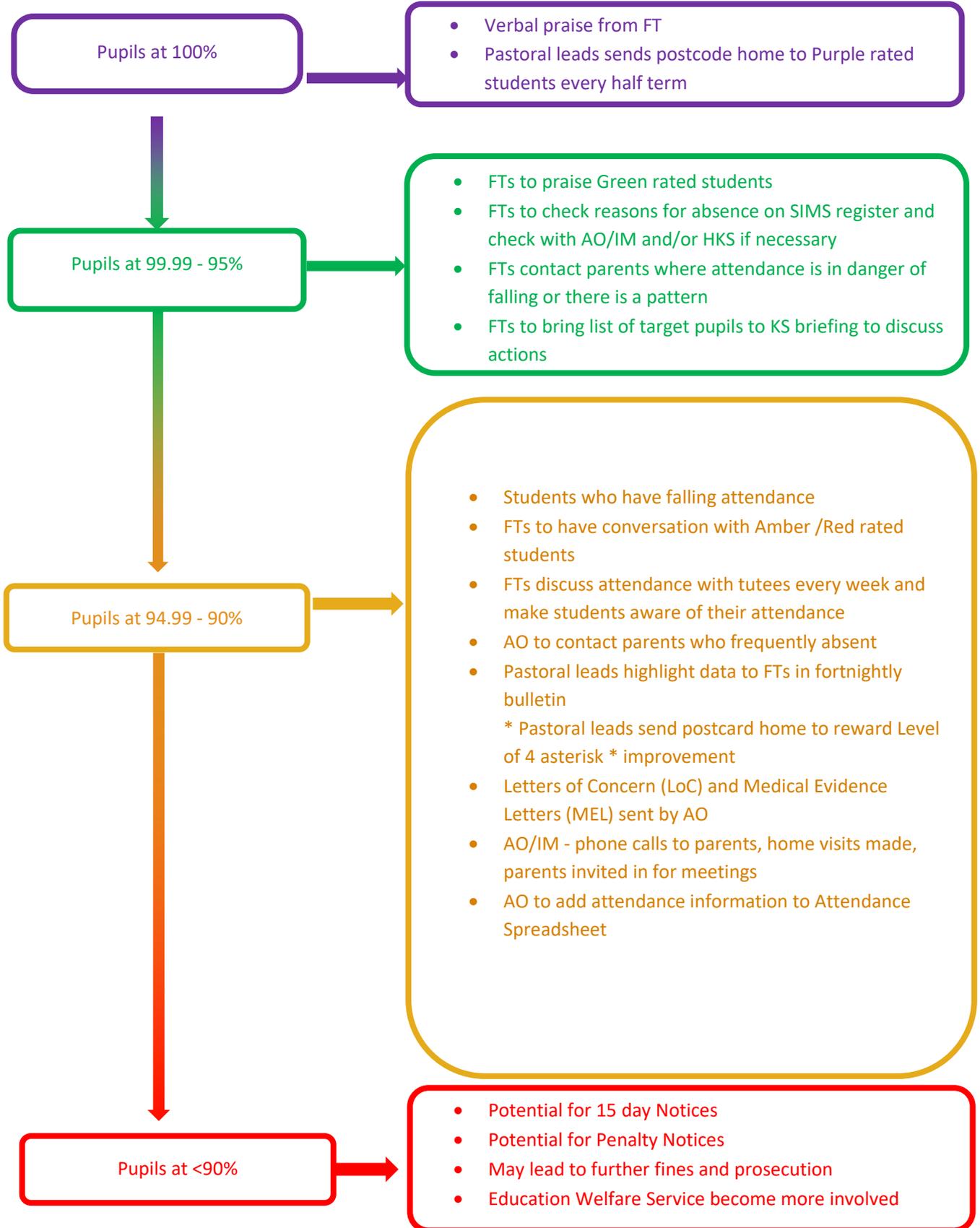
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance and used to record attendance on the register on SIMs at Blackminster and on ScholarPack at Pebworth.

| | Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Present/Approved Educational Activity | / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| | \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| | L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| | B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| | D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| | J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| | P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| | V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| | W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |
| Authorised absence | C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| | E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| | H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| | I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| | M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| | R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| | S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| | T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| | N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| | O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| | U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|---|--|
| Other | X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| | Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| | Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| | # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

Appendix 2: Blackminster process

- Form Tutors (FT) receive Attendance Data from Attendance Officer (AO) and/or Inclusions Manager (IM) each week
- FTs receive colour coded data for attendance of 95% or below in Key Stage Fortnightly Memo from Head of Key Stage (HKS)
- All attendance is available in Staff shared/Admin/Attendance /2020-2021



Appendix 3: Pebworth process

The following details the regular attendance activities which are undertaken by staff at Pebworth. Key groups are tracked carefully and individual pupils monitored throughout.

| Frequency | Activity |
|-------------|--|
| Daily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Teacher/TAs praises children with continued 100% attendance • Class Teacher/TAs have conversations with parents/carers about attendance at drop off and collection times • All staff aware of whole school attendance and any emerging trends through ScholarPack Dashboard • Office Manager calls all pupils on first day of absence where no reason for absence has been provided by parents/carers |
| Weekly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leader/Class Teacher monitors any pupils who have been identified through fortnightly monitoring as causing concern ie. attendance is <90% and not improving |
| Fortnightly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leader completes whole school tracking and monitoring, identifies pupils in each category and those requiring weekly additional monitoring. Warning letters sent to parents/carers as required. Meetings to set attendance action plans set up where required. All pupils who have attendance of <97% are reviewed and bespoke next steps put in place |
| Half termly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child's current attendance profile is sent home to parents with accompanying letter either congratulating them or reminding them of attendance targets and suggesting ways in which we can work together to improve this |

If a pupil's attendance continues to cause concern then the Education Welfare Officer will be involved, 15 day notices and penalty notices may be issued.

Appendix 4: Corona virus update

Withdrawal of the X code for COVID-19 related absence Last year, the law was temporarily changed to allow schools to record absence related to COVID-19 in the attendance register using code X. As this legal amendment has now expired, schools are no longer able to use code X ('not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus') to record any COVID-19 related absence. The temporary addendum has now been withdrawn and the associated sub-codes guidance has ceased. Where a child is unable to attend school because they are ill with suspected COVID-19, their absence should now be recorded as code I 'illness'.

Appendix 5. Recording attendance

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session as usual during any periods impacted by Coronavirus.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to 'exceptional circumstances'

as per our usual policy but also record those pupils who are:

- Unable to attend for reasons related to coronavirus (see section 8 for the relevant absence codes and when we will use them)

A 'soft start' is in place in both schools and so children need to arrive within this window in order to be registered as present. Registers will close at normal time and pupils will be recorded as late as outlined in the usual attendance policy.

6. Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent or carer by telephone, email or letter
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

If a pupil does not attend because they, and/or their parent/carer are concerned about returning to school because of coronavirus, we will arrange a phone call between the parent/carer and a member of the SLT to explain the protective measures the school is taking to keep pupils safe and explore any ways in which we can support a return to school.

6.1 Legal sanctions

Our normal rules on legal sanctions such as penalty notices remain in place during the 2020-2021 academic year, unless the guidance from the government on this changes. Where we are concerned about a pupils' attendance schools can continue to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the LA or Department for Education is updated, and as a minimum every 2 months within term time by Linda McQuone (Executive Headteacher) or Georgia Reynolds (PFS School Leader). At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Pupil absence codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's addendum to their school attendance guidance for the 2020/21 academic year. If not covered here, our normal attendance codes apply.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|----------|---|--|
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil has to self-isolate because they have symptoms or live with someone who does, and are waiting for their test results |
| I | Illness | Pupil remains unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness) |
| I | Illness | Pupil has to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive |
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because someone they live with tested positive |
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil has to self-isolate (for 14 days) because they are a close contact of someone who tested positive |
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil has to quarantine (for 14 days) after a trip to a non-exempt country |
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil is required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or lives with someone who is required to shield |
| X | Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) | Pupil is asked not to attend in the case of local lockdown |