

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

September 2020

Regular attendance is vital for learners to achieve in line with their potential.

The latest government guidance states that pupil attendance is mandatory and that the usual rules on attendance apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil.
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with authorities' codes of conduct.

There are certain circumstances where a learner cannot attend school due to COVID-19 (coronavirus); this is when travelling to school or attending school would be:

- contrary to guidance set out by Public Health England; and/or
- prohibited by any regulation.

Staffordshire County Council have produced an extremely useful guide for parents in relation to COVID-19 absence and this is attached for your information. Also attached is a letter from Jonathan Price (Cabinet Member for Education and SEND) and Dr Richard Harling (Director for Health and Care) at Staffordshire County Council.

Please be assured that we will continue to follow all professional advice to ensure that we keep our learners and staff as safe as possible at all times. It is really important that we all remain extremely vigilant and that learners are reminded both at home and in the academy to keep their distance from their friends, to regularly wash their hands and to use hand sanitiser as directed.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include at least one of the following:

- 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 three 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.

More information is available at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms

During Y9, Y10 and Y11, I am sure you recognise that learners who miss school will miss vital learning which could impact on their performance in examinations. Furthermore, a learner's attendance record forms a significant element of their reference for employment and further education opportunities; we are therefore keen to ensure that all learners achieve full attendance.

We will look to offer support to any learner whose attendance falls below 95% or who has unauthorised absences on their registration certificate. Attendance is classed as being present at school; a dental appointment will lower a learner's attendance percentage even though this may be authorised. Missing the academy transport, resulting in missing the morning register mark, will also affect a learner's attendance record and will result in an unauthorised register mark. The government classifies learners with an attendance percentage below 90%, over a school year, as persistently absent.

We do believe that regular attendance is a shared responsibility between learners, parents/carers and academy staff.

We will:

- Publish all our term dates via our website so that learners know when they should attend. Please note that our term dates and INSET days sometimes differ from other Staffordshire schools.
- Provide you with regular information regarding your son's/daughter's attendance percentage.
- Support you to address any issues which are impacting on your son's/daughter's attendance.
- Comply with government guidelines regarding prosecution for poor attendance and learner leave of absence.
- Request medical evidence to authorise absences due to illness and/or medical appointments once your son/daughter has reached 20 absences (10 days) from school. If we have requested medical evidence from you in the past, we will continue to require it for all future absences
- Refer to the local authority for a possible penalty notice for learners with 20 unauthorised absences.

Learner Leave of Absence

The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests should be made well in advance of the desired period of absence. There is no automatic right to any leave during term time. Leave of Absence application forms are obtainable from the Attendance Officer in Learner Support or can be downloaded via The JCB Academy website under Parental Information.

Should the academy decide not to grant a leave of absence and a learner is taken out of the academy, or an absence is not requested, it will be recorded as unauthorised, which may result in a penalty notice fine of £60 per parent per child. This fine will increase to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine may lead to court proceedings.

Poor Attendance/Persistent Absence

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 amended section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to allow parents to be issued with a penalty where they failed to ensure their child of compulsory school age (5-16) and school registered, regular attendance.

A penalty notice for each parent, per child is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If, after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid, the council will prosecute the parent/s under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1,000.

We would ask that you support us, and your son/daughter, in the following ways:


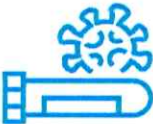


- If your son/daughter is going to be absent please telephone/email us first thing in the morning to advise us of the reason for their absence and when you anticipate they will be back at the academy.
- Provide us with evidence of why an absence is/was necessary whenever possible.
- Only allow your son/daughter to miss a day if they are genuinely not well enough to attend.
- If your son/daughter has to attend a medical appointment during the academy day, consider making it for as late as possible in the afternoon to minimise absence from lessons and minimise the impact on attendance
- If your son/daughter is routinely missing the academy bus, support them to improve their morning routines.
- Be aware of subjects that they may not be enjoying, upcoming tests and deadlines which may be causing them to want to avoid lessons or coming to the academy.
- If you have any concerns about your son's/daughter's attendance, please talk to us, we are happy to help.

To speak to someone about attendance please call 01889 506100 and ask for Mr M Spooner, our Support and Guidance Co-ordinator with responsibility for attendance, or email m.spooner@jcbacademy.com

If your son/daughter is absent, please call 01889 506100 or email office@jcbacademy.com

COVID-19 (coronavirus) absence:




A quick guide for parents / carers

What to do if...		Action needed	Back to school...
	...my child has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Child should get a test Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result Inform school immediately about test result 	...when child's test comes back negative and symptom free for 48 hours
	...my child tests positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Child self-isolates for at least 10 days from when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) Inform school immediately about test results Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day of test if no symptoms) – even if someone test negative during those 14 days 	<p>...when child feels better, and has been without a fever for at least 48 hours</p> <p>They can return to school after 10 days even if they have a cough or loss of smell/taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection is gone.</p>
	...somebody in my household has COVID-19 (coronavirus) symptoms*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Household member with symptoms should get a test Whole household self-isolates while waiting for test result Inform school immediately about test results 	...when household member test is negative, and child does not have COVID-19 symptoms*
	...somebody in my household has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Whole household self-isolates for 14 days from day when symptoms* started (or from day test if no symptoms) – even if someone tests negative during those 14 days 	...when child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during the 14 days

A household includes everyone living in one home plus their support bubble (if you have one).

*Symptoms include at least one of a high temperature; a new continuous cough; a loss of or change to your sense of taste or smell.

See more at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms

What to do if...		Action needed	Back to school...
 <p>...NHS Test and Trace / Local Authority Outbreak Control has identified my child as a 'close contact' of someone with symptoms* or confirmed COVID-19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Child self-isolates for 14 days (as advised by Test and Trace) – even if they test negative during those 14 days Rest of household does not need to self-isolate unless they have also been identified as a 'close contact' of someone with a positive result 	<p>...when the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation, even if they test negative during those 14 days</p>	
 <p>...we / my child has travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not take unauthorised leave in term time Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel Provide information to school as per attendance policy <p>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Whole household self-isolates for 14 days – even if they test negative during those 14 days 	<p>...when the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed for the child, even if they test negative during those 14 days.</p>	
 <p>...we have received advice from a medical / official source that my child must resume shielding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child shouldn't attend school Contact school as advised by attendance officer/pastoral team Child should shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again 	<p>...when school / other agencies inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again</p>	
 <p>...I am not sure who should get a test for COVID-19 (coronavirus)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only people with symptoms* need to get a test People without symptoms are not advised to get a test, even if they are a 'close contact' of someone who tests positive 	<p>...when conditions above, as matching your situation, are met</p>	

For further information: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus

My Ref: JP / TK 029

Date: 23 September 2020

Dear Parent

As you will be aware, schools are working extremely hard to stop the spread of Covid-19.

We wanted to thank you for continuing to send your child to school and encourage you to keep on doing so.

There are a lot of guidelines for everyone to follow regarding positive cases, testing and isolation, and we understand that some of these can be confusing. We want to make these as easy as possible for everyone to follow.

We have put together a 10-step guide to help parents and carers make sense of the guidelines. This will help keep schools, staff and your children stay safe and stop the spread of Covid-19.

Here are the guidelines:

1. If your child has **one or more** of the following symptoms a new, persistent cough, high temperature or loss of taste and smell, they need to stay home and get tested for Covid-19.
2. If your child tests positive, they need to stay home for 10 days from the date of the positive test. The whole household will also need to stay at home, but for 14 days.
3. People in your household do not need to get tested unless they start showing symptoms of Covid-19.
4. If your child tests negative, they can return to school once the symptoms have gone and they are better.

If your child has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and is told to isolate:

5. If your child has been told to isolate as a contact of a positive case, they need to stay at home for 14 days. They do not need to get a test unless they start showing symptoms of Covid-19. Getting a test when not symptomatic will not make any difference to the isolation period from 14 days.

6. You and the rest of your household don't need to isolate unless your child starts showing symptoms.

7. **Please do not get a private test** these may be unreliable, and antibody tests cannot be used for a diagnosis. Only get a test through the NHS or the County Council.

8. Schools should not be asking people to provide evidence of a negative test result before allowing children back into school.

Remember how to beat the virus:

9. Encourage regular handwashing, for at least 20 seconds.


10. Keep your distance ie 2 metres, especially outside the school gates, and wear a face covering when on public transport or in places where social distancing is difficult.

Remember, if you or your child are told to isolate, this means staying at home. If you do not isolate when told to do so, new rules mean you could be fined up to £10,000.

We know there have been issues with national NHS testing. The government is working to increase capacity, and the County Council has also put in place local measures. By only going for a test if you have one or more of the symptoms will help to make sure those who have symptoms can get a test.

We hope this letter makes things a little clearer, and acts as a reminder to follow the guidelines if you are told to do so. We need your help to beat this virus, by working together, following the guidelines, and doing everything we can to ensure our schools can stay safe and remain open.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Price
Cabinet Member for Education
(and SEND)



Dr Richard Harling
Director for Health and Care