



**Principal: Mr Steve Bowler**

### **Advice and support regarding school attendance: September 2020**

Following a strange few months of school life, school attendance is once again mandatory, meaning it is expected that all pupils attend school in line with our attendance policy (found on our school website). We, as ever, have a statutory responsibility to record attendance and follow up closely on absence.

We are fully aware that returning to school after - what is likely for many pupils - a sustained period at home, may pose quite challenging for both pupils and yourselves. We ask, now more than ever, for you to work alongside us in helping to support you in any difficulties you may face and in turn, in supporting positive school attendance.

#### **My child is not able to attend school: what will I do?**

For us, communication between home and school over the next few months will be vitally important. Should your child be generally unwell, have a medical appointment or unable to attend school for another specific reason, we ask that you follow the guidelines set out in our policy and report the absence to us as soon as possible. We do ask that a parent/guardian telephones our school office on the first day of a child's absence and to regularly update us if the absence continues. This will enable us to quickly understand the reason behind the absence and report this accurately within our registers.

#### **Use of penalty fines: what happens?**

As you may be aware from the media, schools are once again obliged to issue penalty fines in the most extreme cases of absence (including holidays taken, unless there is a clear exceptional circumstance). As is typically the case, such measures are always a last resort at Monkton Academy and we always encourage effective communication regarding attendance in the first instance. Please understand that we will not be authorising term time holidays, unless in the most exceptional of circumstances – as outlined within our policy.

#### **My child/our family are required to self-isolate: what will we do?**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of this term, there may be some circumstances where pupils are unable to attend school due to COVID 19. An example being, a pupil being required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or a confirmed case of COVID 19. This has been recognised by the Government, and schools have received specific guidance with regards to this. Parents will not be penalised for following public health advice for their child not attending a given session and the absence from school will not count statistically. We do however need to know in such circumstances whether this is the clear reason behind an absence, as we have a specific code to use in our registers and clear advice we must follow.



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**My child or a family member has developed symptoms of COVID 19: what should we do?**

Should your child or a member of your household develop COVID 19 symptoms, please contact school immediately to inform us of the absence and follow the advice detailed below:

- Pupils who themselves show symptoms of COVID 19 should self-isolate and get a test. This absence will be recorded appropriately at school. If a pupil tests negative, feels well and no longer has symptoms, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- 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). These symptoms can last for several weeks once the infection has gone
- If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test. If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms.

As you can see, from the depth of information here, we will certainly require open channels of communication during the period of absence in order for us to record details appropriately. We ask, that should this impact your child or family at some point over the course of the academic year, that you stay in touch with us regularly and provide us with clear information. We trust that these details will be followed carefully, to help prevent the transmission of the virus, but also to allow pupils to return to school as promptly as possible to avoid further time away from learning.

**My child is finding returning to school difficult: what should I do?**

Finally, should your child find coming to school difficult, or you feel they may be avoiding school please let us know. Returning to school after the summer break can often be challenging for many pupils; returning after an extended period of absence such as this is a most exceptional circumstance that may come with a high level of anxiety. We are here to help you as best we can. Let us know as soon as possible if issues arise. Please know, such circumstances are new to us too – we will however endeavour to offer the best support and advice possible. Communication and working together will be key.

Let's work together to make the return to school as smooth as possible for all of our pupils – they absolutely deserve it.

Kind regards  
Miss L. Heathfield  
Vice Principal/ Attendance lead.