

EWS plan for 8 March 2021

The DfE guidance for schools' 8 March 2021 reopening is a replication of the guidance issued for Autumn 2020 return to school with the following specific changes;

- Mandatory attendance expectation for all pupils
- Government recommendation for use of face coverings in classrooms and other indoor environments. This is for a "limited period".

Attendance:

The usual rules and regulations for attendance will be reinstated from 8 March 2021, therefore the legal sanctions and penalties related to attendance will apply.

Schools will return to recording attendance in line with DfE guidance, including use of Code X to record absence related to shielding (CEV), isolation and quarantine.

With specific reference to secondary age students: Code Y should be used to record absence of those unable to attend due to the testing programme.

Absence without valid reason must be recorded as unauthorised.

As with Autumn 2020 return, the EWS will take a supportive approach in the 4 week period leading up to the Easter holiday.

We will support you in:

- contacting anxious or reluctant families to discuss any concerns, provide reassurance and encourage return to school. We will remind them that school attendance is mandatory;
- contacting families considering EHE to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibility for providing education and allowing them the space to change their mind.

In addition to this, we will continue with arranging Court Assessment Meetings for families where a decision had already been made to consider legal sanctions.

Prosecutions:

Magistrates courts only reopened to local authorities in January 2021 and with a reduced service. Our court hearings have reduced from fortnightly 6 weekly hearings where only 2/3 cases can be presented. Therefore we are currently in the process of reviewing outstanding cases and most likely will have to withdraw those that are now out of their prosecution time period.

Attached summarised DfE re-opening attendance guidance.