

September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance at school

At the beginning of the new school year, it is important to stress just how essential good school attendance will be this year. The corona virus lockdown has resulted in the majority of our pupils missing 14 weeks of normal schooling and although parents and the school have worked hard to mitigate the effects of this, it is vital that everyone takes advantage of each moment in school this year.

We always aim to work alongside parents to ensure that all our pupils benefit from their time with us and reach their full potential. As you will be aware, from September, it will be mandatory for all pupils to attend school following easing of the lockdown.

The Government remains very clear that “pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies, for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness or is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.”. Please note, that if a pupil has been in the ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’ category, they should have received appropriate advice about school attendance based on a consultation with their paediatric specialist or GP.

Our normal attendance procedures will resume again in September and if your child is ill, **we would ask you to contact the school on the first day of absence.**

Pupils self-isolating

If a pupil is self-isolating, **it is essential that we are informed on the first day of their isolation period.**

The medical advice is clear in that pupils must self-isolate if they have coronavirus symptoms or live in the same household as somebody who does. The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- 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 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- 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.

When do you self-isolate?

- If you have one or more of the symptoms above, you must self-isolate straight away for 10 days.
- If you live in the same household as someone with coronavirus symptoms, you must self-isolate straight away for 14 days.

Testing

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As soon as you decide to self-isolate, you should get a Covid19 test. You can order a test through the NHS website, or by dialing 119. The government says that “we currently aim to provide results within 48 hours of taking a test, but some results may take longer.”

If the test is negative

If a pupil gets a negative test result, this means they are at low risk of having coronavirus. Other members of the household can stop self-isolating. If the pupil feels well and no longer has symptoms similar to coronavirus, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

If the test is positive

If the pupil gets a positive test result, this means that when they took the test, they had coronavirus. The pupil, and other members of the household, must continue to self-isolate. They should then be contacted by the NHS test and Trace service. **You should inform the school as soon as you have a positive result, so that we can advise others to self-isolate.**

Returning in September

Being out of normal education for a lengthy period of time may lead to anxiety about returning for some pupils. **It is vitally important that this is discussed with school to decide on an appropriate course of action**, and we would ask you to call us on 01328 701265, or email attendance@litchamschool.net.

Fixed Penalty Notices

We work hard with all of our families to support good attendance in school. We are however legally required to make you aware that the Local Authority operates a system of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN). This applies if a pupil meets the criteria for legal intervention, as follows:

1. 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 7th September 2020). Please note one school day equates to 2 sessions.
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday (i.e. 9 sessions of unauthorised absence in 6 weeks, with one day equating to 2 sessions).

Any pupil who meets either criteria may be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a FPN is issued, it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

We very much look forward to welcoming all of our pupils back full-time into school from September 7th.

Please do not hesitate to contact the attendance office if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely



Paul Clark
Assistant Headteacher