



# Attendance, Punctuality and Exceptional Leave Policy

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**Good Practice**  
*Brandon J. Smith*

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## Definitions

In this **Attendance, Punctuality and Exceptional Leave Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- I. **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Attendance, Punctuality and Exceptional Leave Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- II. **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- III. **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- IV. **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Local Academy Committee of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- V. **'Catholic Senior Executive Leader'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- VI. **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- VII. **'Local Academy Committee'** means the governing body of the School.
- VIII. **'Academy Committee Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Academy Committee of the School, from time to time.
- IX. **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- X. **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- XI. **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- XII. **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body elected from time to time.
- XIII. **'Full time'** is defined as an employee working 37 hours a week, 52 weeks a year.
- XIV. **'Family Support Worker'** 'this role exercises expertise and best practices to increase school attendance. This role works alongside external agencies and continues to build relationships with our families and children who are not able to achieve full attendance and may need support or intervention in some way to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- XV. **'Attendance Team'** at Cardinal Wiseman, this team monitor and address/ support/ challenge attendance with families at the Secondary School.
- XVI. **'Learning Mentor'** this role supports the school in tracking attendance and liaising with external agency. This role is key in building relationships with families and children.
- XVII. **'CAF Worker or Lead CAF Worker'** this role liaises with families at Secondary school working closely with the Attendance team. Their role would include working with families in the CAF arena to resolve identified attendance issues.
- XVIII. **'Remote Learning'** means that schools provide the opportunity for pupils/ students and teachers to remain connected and engaged with the content while working from their homes. Opportunities for remote learning are typically linked to emergency situations that pose a threat to student safety. The learning is dependent on preparedness, technology tools, or overall pupil support infrastructure. It is different from virtual school or virtual learning programs that typically have gone through an official process of establishing a school, adopting an online curriculum, and creating a dedicated structure to support students enrolled in the school. It may mean that a paper based remote learning is provided where there is no access to technology tools.

## Introduction

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At our schools, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will recognise those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

A child's health is of paramount importance and we want them to be well. If the school feel they are not well enough to learn in school they will contact the parent/carers to let them recuperate at home.

## 1. Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

- 1.1 Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 There is no automatic right to any leave of absence and all schools in Coventry are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Being mindful of this, only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time.
- 1.4 Further guidance can be found in the Exceptional Leave section of this policy but it should be noted that requests for leave of absence for all pupils will usually be refused.
- 1.5 Any leave taken without authorisation can lead to parents/carers (of children between the age of 5 and 16 years) being issued a Fixed Penalty Notice which is currently £60 per parent per child, to be paid within 21 days (the fine doubles to £120 per parent per child after 21 days). After 28 days the matter is referred to the Local Authority for non-payment and can result in court action being taken.
- 1.6 If the Penalty Notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to up to £1000.

## 2. What is the difference between Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

### 2.1. Authorised absence

- 2.1.1.** The absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. The decision whether or not to authorise any absence will always rest with the school.
- 2.1.2.** Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours or if a child is absent for their birthday, this will not make it an authorised absence.
- 2.1.3.** There will be times when your child must miss school due to illness. You must contact the school before 9:30 am EACH day that your child is absent from school. Please note that 'unwell' is not acceptable and we do require the nature of illness. If your child is on their 3rd day of consecutive illness one of the Attendance or Pastoral Team, will make a wellbeing home visit on their third day of illness.
- 2.1.4.** Your child's attendance is monitored on a regular basis by staff in school. We look for patterns (e.g. regularity in the day that is missed, e.g. Monday, or after a holiday period) and a member of staff will raise this with parents in addressing absence, to ascertain the reasons why this may be happening. If your child has regular periods of absence or their attendance falls below a certain level, the school may notify you that in future, absences will only be authorised where medical evidence is provided. The Family Support Worker/ Learning Mentor or member of the Attendance Team may also be asked to contact you on the school's behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.
- 2.1.5.** Wherever possible, the school would expect medical appointments to be arranged out of school hours. Where this is not possible, an appointment card/letter will need to be provided in order for the session to be authorised. Your child is expected to attend before and/or after the appointment when possible.

### 2.2. Unauthorised absence

- 2.2.1.** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Furthermore, an absence is also unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- 2.2.2.** Absences will be unauthorised where no contact is made by parents to explain why their child is absent each day. Absences will also be unauthorised where medical evidence has been requested and has not been provided by parents.
- 2.2.3.** The Family Support Worker may be asked to contact you on the school's behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.

## 3. Punctuality

- 3.1.** Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their education but also that of other pupils. Schools should actively discourage late arrival; staff should be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. If lateness persists parents/guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem with a school representative.
- 3.2.** Parents are informed and reminded of the school dates and times in a number of different ways throughout the school year. The importance of the registration time in school as a time for greetings and early morning learning is stressed to parents. All pupils who arrive late have to sign in on arrival and an accurate log of their time of arrival is made. This log can be used as evidence if a prosecution through court proceedings is initiated as a result of persistent absence or lateness.
- 3.3.** At 9.20am the registers will be closed and the morning session will be unauthorised and coded as 'U'.
- 3.4.** If your child has 10 or more late sessions in a 5 week period you may receive a £60 fine per parent per child from the Local Authority.

## 4. Procedures

### 4.1. Registration

- 4.1.1. The school day timings are on your school website. Details of school day timings are included in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.1.2. The register is taken once the children have settled into class. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a N mark (not present). If a child arrives at school later than the school day start time they are given a Late mark. Office or teaching staff will record the number of minutes late on Arbor.
- 4.1.3. If your child arrives to school after the registers have closed, which is 30 minutes after the school day starts, in accordance with Local Authority regulations, your child will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- 4.1.4. The sessions timings for Nursery are on the individual school website. Persistent absence in Nursery may result in your child being removed from the roll.

### 4.2. If a child is absent without notification

- 4.2.1. It is the responsibility of parents to notify schools before 9:30am if their child is going to be absent from school. This must be done EACH day until your child returns to school. Where no notification has been received by 9.30am a text message will be sent or a telephone call made.
- 4.2.2. If there is no immediate response to the message, the absence will automatically be unauthorised and a home visit may be carried out by our Family Support Worker and/or Learning Mentor (at Primary) or member of the Attendance and/or CAF team (at Secondary).

### 4.3. Missing children

- 4.3.1. If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible. A child who is Missing in Education may be:
  - A child who is not at their last known address and:
  - has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or:
  - left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.

This policy does not refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from the home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school must refer these children immediately to the Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS), and/or to the Police.

- 4.3.2. The Family Support Worker/ Learning Mentor or member of the Attendance Team will complete the relevant Missing Child paperwork and notify the Local Authority.
- 4.3.3. In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from the receiving school. Should no notification be received the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Local Authority. If unsuccessful, a missing person form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority and the pupil removed from roll after twenty days.
- 4.3.4. In the case of unauthorised holidays, pupils' names will be removed from the roll after twenty days of absence. Parents are made aware of this before the leave of absence, and by letter when the child's name has been removed from the roll

## 5. Requests For Exceptional Leave Of Absence During Term Time

- 5.1. Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in very exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.
- 5.2. Except in an emergency, permission for any period of leave must be sought from the school before it is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements.
- 5.3. Any request must be made on an Exceptional Leave of Absence Form, which can be obtained from the school office. The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.
- 5.4. Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school. If you take your child on holiday during term time, or where your request for leave has not been granted, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised holiday. This will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, which is currently **£60** per parent per child, to be paid within 21 days (the fine doubles to **£120** per parent per child after 21 days). After 28 days the matter is referred to the Local Authority for non-payment and can result in court action being taken.
- 5.5. Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Principal on behalf of the Academy Committee. Where necessary, a meeting will be arranged between parents and the Principal to discuss the application.
- 5.6. Absence for the purpose of a family holiday does not constitute exceptional leave. Taking holidays during term time will affect your child's learning and we expect parents to take holidays during official school closure periods.
- 5.7. If you take your child out of school for a holiday then your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised holiday. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.
- 5.8. Where the school suspects that a child is absent due to a holiday, steps will be taken to investigate further. This will involve a home visit during the absence period with a view to having direct contact with you and your child. Parents will also be required to produce evidence (for instance medical evidence) in support of the period of absence in order to avoid the issue of a Penalty Notice and / or prosecution.
- 5.9. If the pupil is female and from a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) identified affected community, or the pupil is travelling to a country that would deem the pupil to be 'at risk', the Safeguarding Lead will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer and use direct questioning to ascertain whether 'cutting' of the girl will be undertaken during the leave of absence. The Safeguarding Lead will then take the information from this meeting and make a decision on whether to refer to local Referral and Assessment Services or the Police.

## 6. Long-term absence through accident or illness

- 6.1 If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may liaise with the hospital education service so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## 7. Monitoring

- 7.1. Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance in their class and registers must be completed within 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon session commencing.
- 7.2. The Learning Mentor (or equivalent) and Family Support Worker and Attendance Team monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis and will issue letters, make telephone calls, arrange school meetings, request medical evidence or undertake home visits where necessary to address levels of absence observed.
- 7.3. The rates of attendance will be reported in the Principal's report (see Appendix 3).



## 8. Repeated unauthorised absences

- 8.1. The Governors supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. A 'Form A' penalty notice will be issued in respect of unauthorised absence (i.e. parentally condoned absence, persistently late arrival at school, truancy) if a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in any 5 week period.
- 8.2. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The Family Support Worker/ Learning Mentor (at Primary) or CAF Worker/ Attendance team (at Secondary) may be asked to contact you on the school's behalf to discuss concerns about your child's attendance.

**It is recognised that poor school attendance can be the result of difficulties faced by a child or family therefore a co-ordinated approach by a number of agencies can help these children and families.**

## 9. Persistent Absence

- 9.1. Since the 1st September 2015, the Government has reduced the threshold from 15% to 10% for persistent absence. This will now class a child with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee. This equates to 38 sessions or 19 days of absence across the year. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to fulfil their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure that regular attendance is maintained. The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90% at any time during their school life. All children whose attendance has fallen to 90% or are at risk of becoming persistent absentees will be monitored rigorously.

## 10. Rewards for good attendance

- 10.1. All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive recognition for their attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special incentives for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.
- 10.2. The class with the highest attendance each week will receive recognition.
- 10.3. Parents/carers will be texted monthly if their child has 100% attendance. **(Applicable to Cardinal Wiseman Only)**

## 11. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Academy Committee. This policy will be reviewed by CC3 Quality Provision, Performance and Standards.

## 12. Linked Policies

This Attendance, Punctuality and Exceptional Leave Policy is linked to our:

- TRCA Children Missing in Education
- TRCA Remote Faith and Learning Policy (COVID)
- TRCA Safeguarding
- TRCA Test and Trace Policy (COVID)



### 13. COVID Addendum

- 13.1.** COVID has had an impact on schools from when the lockdown was put in place from March 23<sup>rd</sup>. DfE Guidance has been forthcoming to support schools in Attendance Matters.
- 13.2.** From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be **mandatory** and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:
- 13.2.1.** parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
  - 13.2.2.** schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
  - 13.2.3.** the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
  - 13.2.4.** If children are not in school for a period of time, the staff **must** follow the procedure in the **TRCA Children Missing in Education Policy**.
- 13.3. Pupils returning from abroad** Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
- 13.3.1.** View guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK by clicking [here](#)
  - 13.3.2.** As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.
- 13.4.** Pupils who are **clinically extremely vulnerable** in a future local lockdown scenario only
- 13.4.1.** View guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19 by clicking [here](#)
- 13.5. Shielding** advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- 13.5.1.** If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.
  - 13.5.2.** Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.
  - 13.5.3.** Schools will contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.
  - 13.5.4.** Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.
- 13.6. Local lockdown** may be implemented where rates of the disease rise locally, our schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.
- 13.7. Remote education** will be implemented if a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.
- 13.8. Data collection** will continue with the recording of school attendance data as part of the school census which will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.
- 13.9. Appendix 4** details the means by which we identify pupils that would be required to self isolate
- 13.10. Appendix 5** details the explanation and use of coding during COVID pandemic.

### Application for Exceptional Leave Of Absence

This application must be submitted to the Principal before the proposed period of exceptional leave. In case of emergency, this form must be completed beforehand, as far in advance as possible.

As recommended by the Local Authority, the school has a strict policy on Exceptional Leave. This applies to **ALL** the children of the school community. A copy of this form and the school's Attendance Policy can be obtained from the school office and from the school's website.

Name of child		Class
Proposed date(s) of absence	From:	To:
Siblings at other schools	Name & DOB of child(ren)	Name of school
Reason for proposed absence (please continue on the reverse of this sheet if necessary)		
Signature of parent/guardian	Name of parent/guardian	Date of request

Your application will be considered by the Principal. There may be circumstances where a meeting will be arranged for you to discuss your application with the Principal. Evidence of travel bookings may be required. Your child's attendance record will be taken into consideration.

**If permission is refused and your child is absent for the above period, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence and you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. Similarly, if your child fails to return on the agreed date, the same may apply. If your child is absent for a prolonged period without agreement, your child can lose their school place and will be removed from roll.**

For official use only:		
Action	Initials	Date
Seen by Principal		
Principal's comments (e.g. in support or on attendance record)		
Evidence provided by the parent to support the request		

## Appendix 1 Timings of School Day

	Cardinal Wiseman	Corpus Christi	Good Shepherd	SS Peter and Paul	St Gregory's	Sacred Heart	St Patrick's
<b>Start of day</b>							
Nursery		8.45am	8.30am		8.30am	8.30am	8.45am
Main school	8.55am	8.55am	8.55am	8.55am	8.50am	8.50am	8.55am
Sixth form	8.50am						
<b>End of day</b>							
Nursery		3.30pm	3.30pm		3.15pm	3.30pm	3.00pm
Main school	3.20pm	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.00pm
Sixth form	3.20pm						

*Nursery – There are varying times of day within Nursery so please see individual schools for arrangements regarding sessions.*

*Please note that these times may vary due to staggered start and finish times in line with COVID government guidelines.*

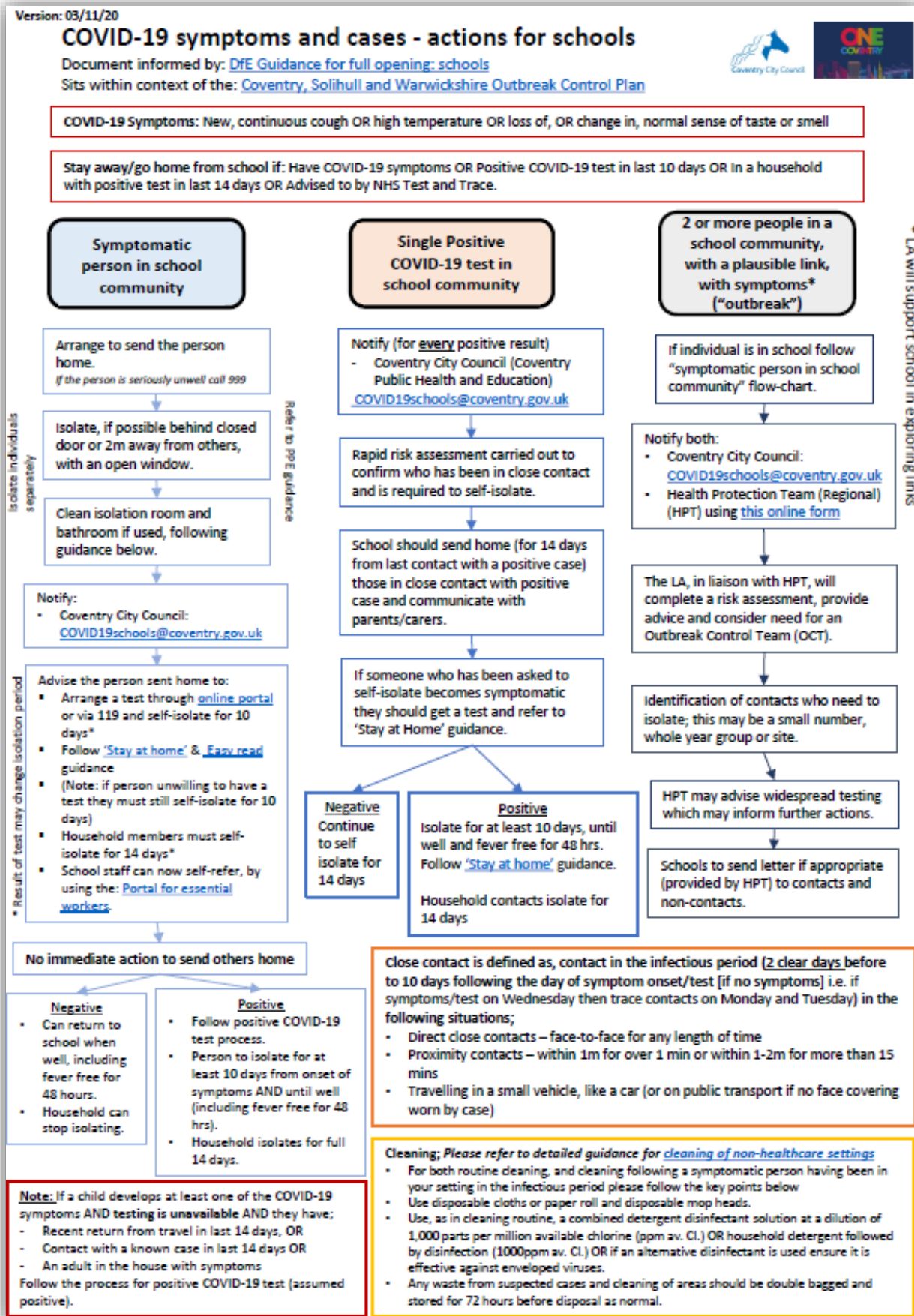
## Appendix 2 - Roles

<b>School</b>	<b>Team Member</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Cardinal Wiseman</b>	Miss Marshment	Assistant Vice Principal (Safeguarding and Attendance)
<b>Cardinal Wiseman</b>	Mrs Hirons	Assistant Vice Principal (Behaviour Team)
<b>Cardinal Wiseman</b>	Mrs Shannon	Attendance Officer
<b>Sacred Heart</b>	Mrs Dinter	Pastoral Support Lead
<b>Sacred Heart</b>	Mrs Teal	Teaching Assistant
<b>Corpus Christi</b>	Mrs Parsons	Learning Mentor
<b>Corpus Christi</b>	Miss Flynn	Admin Officer
<b>St John Fisher</b>	Mrs Galloway	Pastoral Support Lead
<b>St Patrick's</b>	Mrs Doherty	Learning Mentor
<b>St Gregory's</b>	Mrs Sweatman	Learning Mentor
<b>St Gregory's</b>	Mrs Bruneau	Admin Officer
<b>Good Shepherd</b>	Mrs Baker	Learning Mentor
<b>SS Peter &amp; Paul</b>	Miss Gordon	Learning Mentor
<b>SS Peter &amp; Paul</b>	Mrs McNaney	Admin Officer
<b>Shared Services Team</b>	Claire McElroy	Family Support Worker

## Appendix 3 – Principal Attendance Reporting

Attendance 2020/21										
	All figures are cumulative with the exception of Penalty notices, Exclusions and Pupil movement.	No. in grp	2019-20 (up to 20 <sup>th</sup> March)	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2	Comments
			%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Attendance	<b>Attendance – all pupils (Overall %)</b>									
	Pupil Premium pupils									
	Non Pupil Premium pupils									
	SEND									
	Boys									
	Girls									
	Ethnicity 1									
	Ethnicity 2									
	Ethnicity 3									
	Unauthorised absences									
Unauthorised and Absence	<b>Unauthorised holidays all (%)</b>									
	Unauthorised holidays – Pupil Premium									
	Authorised absence due to illness – All									
	Authorised absence due to illness – Pupil Premium									
	X code (COVID 19 related absences)									
Persistent Absence	<b>Persistent Absence - all (%)</b>									
	Pupil Premium Persistent Absence									
	Non Pupil Premium Persistent Absence									
	Ethnicity 1 Persistent Absence									
	Ethnicity 2 Persistent Absence									
	Ethnicity 3 Persistent Absence									
			Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	
Lates and Fixed Penalty Notices	Number of Lates (registered before 9.30am) -all									
	Number of Lates Pupil Premium									
	Number of <b>Form A</b> penalty notices (over 5 unauthorised absence)									
	Number of <b>Form B</b> penalty notices (unauthorised hols 5 + days)									
Exclusion	Exclusions - Fixed Term –all (number)									
	Exclusions – Permanent – all (number)									
Pupil Movement	Number of new starters.									
	Number of pupils taken off roll (details in comments)									

Appendix 4 – COVID-19 Flow Chart (updated 04/11/2020)



## Appendix 5 – Attendance X Code Flowchart

