

ALL IN



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

every student, every day

EDUCATION



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

It is the government's plan that all children and young people, in all year groups, will return to school full time from the beginning of the autumn term because:

- The prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased since schools and colleges restricted their opening to most pupils in March
- The NHS Test and Trace system is up and running
- Government scientists understand more about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments in schools.

Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We know that children have missed being with their friends and the wider social aspects of school.

Not returning to school in September risks pupils falling further behind because we know that pupils with higher overall absence suffer academically.

As a result, the government has asked schools to plan for all children and young people to return from the start of the new academic year and they have reinstated the law around parental responsibility for school attendance including penalty notices and prosecutions. This means that school attendance is therefore compulsory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

We know that many parents are still worried about sending children back to school. Please remember schools have remained open during the worst days of the Pandemic for vulnerable children and the children of Key Workers and they have been practising strict protective measures. We also now know that coronavirus (COVID-19) presents a much lower risk to children of becoming severely ill, and there is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults do. There will still be risks while coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, and that is why schools will be asked to put in place a range of measures to protect your children. This means that things will be a bit different when your children return to school in September and most schools have published information about changes on their web-sites.

The government have produced guidance for schools which sets out some of the changes and protective measures the government is asking schools to put in place and what parents, carers, children and young people will need to do to help ensure schools are as safe as possible for everyone. The full guidance is available on the DfE website following the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-provider-s-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term>

If you are still worried about your child returning to school please discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school has specialist staff that may be able to help, and all schools work closely with health and council teams who may also be able to help if needed.

In addition, this is not the time to take your child out of school for a family holiday or other term time leave. It is unlikely that any leave will be authorised by the Head Teacher after so much enforced absence from school. The more your child is in school, the more they will catch up.