

# School Attendance From the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021

The Government instructions are that all children and students should return to school or college, and attendance will be mandatory once again from this date.

Mandatory attendance means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child (if they are of compulsory school age), to school regularly if they are registered at one in line with Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act. Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Secondary aged pupils (year 7 and above) should take part in [asymptomatic testing](#) upon their return in the week of 8 March. Where a secondary age pupil is not expected to attend due to their school's testing programme in the week of 8 March, absence will not be penalised. Local authorities and schools have a range of [legal powers to enforce attendance](#) if a child or young person misses school without a valid reason, which includes the issuing of Penalty Notice's and prosecutions.

Pupils not undergoing testing should attend school in line with the school's phased return arrangements. If you are a parent of a child who is vulnerable or if you are a critical worker, your child should continue to be able to attend school throughout, unless they receive a positive test result.

The [Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](#) has made it clear that the overwhelming majority of children and young people still have no symptoms or very mild illness only. Returning to school or college is also vital for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development.

We know some parents will be feeling anxious about their children returning to school. To continue to manage the risks nurseries, childminders, schools and colleges will continue to implement the range of [protective measures](#) that they have been using throughout the autumn term. They have further strengthened these measures to help decrease the disruption the virus causes to education. Current evidence suggests that these measures are still the right ones to take. Your child's nursery, childminder, school, or college can give you more information about the measures they have in place and will support you with their return to alleviate any anxieties you may have.

If your child is confirmed as clinically extremely vulnerable, they are advised not to attend school or college until further notice. Find out more on [shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). Your child's school may check that your child is advised not to attend school or college by asking to see a copy of the shielding letter sent to you.

NHS mental health services remain open and have digital tools to connect with people and provide ongoing support. Please use your local children and young people's mental health service when needed.

More information and guidance is available on the DfE website: [What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)