



Returning to school in September 2020

Frequently asked Questions about School Attendance

August 2020

From 1st September 2020 pupil attendance at school will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance, set out in [School Attendance, DfE Statutory Guidance August 2020](#) will apply.

Our Principal Education Welfare Officer, Sarah Wintringham, has prepared with Legal Services a Northumberland response to the questions we have already been asked frequently.

There will surely be more questions asked in the next few weeks. The Education Welfare team will be working with schools and families to support and secure attendance. If you are unsure about any aspect of the rules or how to answer a question you might be asked yourself, then please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Wintringham.

This is a guidance document for professionals who work with school age children. The responses are in accordance with government guidance @ 26.08.20 which may be subject to change at short notice. This information will then be revised and re-circulated.

Does my child have to return to school?

Yes – as of September 2020 the Department for Education has reapplied the law and pupil attendance will be mandatory. If your child is of compulsory school age – age 5 to 16 - as a parent/carer it is your duty to ensure that they attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

Will all schools/Alternative Providers open from the first day of term?

Yes - all schools and Alternative Providers will open in September 2020

My child attends 2 different provisions - is this still allowed?

Yes - the 2 provisions will have discussed what needs to be done to reduce any risk.

What will happen if I don't send my child to school?

Your child's school is responsible for recording attendance and following up pupil absence. They always aim to work with parents/carers to resolve any issues or concerns around attendance. However, in some cases, Headteachers might use sanctions which include penalty notices. A penalty notice is £60 and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If my child is following public health advice relating to Covid-19 and not attending school, will they still have to do school work at home?

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice relating to Covid-19, schools should be able to immediately offer access to remote education. Schools should monitor engagement with this activity.

My child does not like school and is reluctant to return

Your child must resume their attendance at school with effect from September 2020. Attendance at school is mandatory from this date and action may be taken against you, the parent/carer, if your child is not receiving a suitable education. It is understandable that parents will be worried about their children returning to school, and the children themselves may also be nervous about changes to the school routine and layout.

The school will have put robust safety measures in place to keep children safe and to reduce any health and safety risks in school. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school directly or visit the school website for reassurance and more information on what these safety measures will look like.

What if my child is anxious about going into school?

You can get information that will help you support your child from these sites: [Kooth](#) and [Young Minds](#). There are also additional resources available on Northumberland County Council's return to school padlet https://padlet.com/nies1/return_to_school intended to prevent extreme anxiety amongst children, young people and their families.

I don't want my child to return to school because of my own anxiety

This is a time where everyone has understandable anxieties. However, you are still responsible by law for making sure that your child attends school from the first day of term. Be assured that your child's school will be following government guidance and is taking every precaution to ensure everyone's safety. If you need to, then seek help for yourself.

We have struggled to maintain routines during lockdown and this has impacted on my child's behaviour. What should I do to help my child return to school?

If you are worried about your child's behaviour, please contact your child's school for additional support. The school will work with you to develop a plan to re-engage your child and re-establish routines to help your child settle back into school.

I don't want my child to return to school. Can I continue to educate him/her at home longer as part of an informal arrangement?

No. If your child normally receives their education from a school at which they are a registered pupil, then they must resume this education through attendance at the school from the first day of the Autumn Term.

If you want to continue to educate your child at home then you will need to make a formal decision to provide *elective home education*. Your child will then be removed from a school role and their education will become solely your responsibility. To enable you to make an informed decision about Elective Home Education then read our leaflet [10 things you should know about elective home education](#) which has links to more detailed information, or contact educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk

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