



2nd September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

School is fully re-opening in September

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support and positivity throughout this period; we are very much looking forward to welcoming our children and school community back in September.

During the period of partial school closures the rules around attendance were relaxed however, the government has now re-enforced **mandatory attendance** and the usual rules on school attendance will apply.

Attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term and the government guidance is very clear in the expectation of all children returning to school in September. This means that we will be recording attendance and following up on any absences, with the exception of a small number of students who remain under the care of a specialist health professional and who are unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical or public health advice and have the necessary documented evidence from the health care professional. These students will continue to be supported with a remote learning programme of study. Absence will not be penalised if you are following clinical and/or public health advice.

Children who have been staying at home due to previous shielding guidance should now be able to come back to school, as the government paused this guidance on 1 August. For more information with regards to this please read the [current advice on shielding](#). You can also find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#).

We understand that there are also some new Covid related exceptions, and if one of the following conditions applies, we would not expect your child to attend school for the government's recommended time period as per below:

- Your child is self-isolating for 10 days because they have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result, or they are isolating for 14 days following close contact with someone who has coronavirus
- Your child is required by legislation to self-isolate for two weeks as part of a period of quarantine, e.g. following a holiday abroad to a country that required a quarantine period upon return to the UK
- Your child is being advised to shield due to a rise of the rate of coronavirus in the local area – students who have previously been advised to shield should seek medical advice before returning to school
- The school has partially closed due to a local lockdown and your child does not fall into one of the eligible groups to attend
- Students who are required to shield in the case of a local lockdown, or live with someone who is required to shield. If a student is living with a family member who is shielding we will require to see a copy of the shielding letter.

You may well be asked to provide medical evidence for any of the above and **we will ask parents / carers to inform us immediately of the results if a Covid test is taken.**

If you have concerns about attendance due to your child's medical condition, please can I ask that you contact your specialist health care professional and seek guidance. If any of the above applies to your child, please contact the school straight away so that we can plan effectively for them.

In addition, if you have any anxieties about your child's return in September please contact the school.

Attendance advice for parents

At Marlborough, we are very aware about the link between good attendance and good progress. Research has shown that the lower the attendance of a learner, the lower the GCSE grade at the end of Year 11. **Less than 95% attendance every year in school equals a 1 grade difference across ALL GCSE grades. As a result, we have set our school target for attendance at 96% and expect all learners to achieve this.** Additionally, this is useful preparation for the workplace, where an absence rate of 5% or above would be considered a cause for concern.

Attendance matters

If a learner does not attend school or is not taking part in an approved educational activity, they are classed as ABSENT from school. This means that if your child is off school for any reason, even if they are ill or have medical permission to be off school, they are classed as ABSENT.

100% Attendance = 190 days at school

8 days absence is 96%

12 days absence is 94%

19 days absence is 90%

29 days absence is 85%

38 days absence is 80%

47 days absence is 75%

Rewards for getting it right!

By having attendance on or above 96%, your child will qualify for a range of attendance rewards during each half term.

What can parents/carers do to ensure good attendance?

- Ensure your child attends every day, on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Ensure school has up to date addresses and telephone numbers.
- Contact school on the first morning of absence by 8:30am to provide your reason for absence, either via the **Absence line number - 01727 731368** or email **attendance@marlborough.herts.sch.uk**
- Contact the school on each day of absence until your child returns to school.
- If contact is not made for an absence, it is recorded as unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding if the absence is acceptable or not.
- Provide medical evidence for any absence exceeding 5 days (10 sessions) or more.
- Ensure medical appointments are made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child needs to be in school prior to and after the appointment. We will need medical evidence upon their return.

- Holiday requests during term time will not be authorised. Parents who take their children out of school for a holiday may be issued with a Penalty Notice.
- Contact school if you are experiencing difficulty in getting your child into school.
- Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance.

Where absence is unavoidable, the school is very happy to ensure that work is provided so that your child does not fall behind in his or her progress. You will need to contact your child's Director of Learning to arrange this.

What is classed as persistent absence?

Persistent absence is classed as any absence that equates to over 10% of the academic year at any given time. Any learner who appears on the persistent absence list may be monitored by the Local Authority Attendance Service. The thresholds are set out below:

Close of 1st half-term:	3.5 days in total
Close of 2nd half-term:	7 days in total
Close of 3rd half-term:	10 days in total
Close of 4th half-term:	12.5 days in total
Close of 5th half-term:	15.5 days in total
Close of 6th half-term:	19 days in total

Our Attendance Team

We have a very dedicated team of staff at Marlborough who work on attendance. Each of these members of staff scrutinise our attendance data daily and work closely with the Local Authority Attendance Service.

As you would expect, we have very high standards and are committed to all our learners making maximum progress. The Attendance Team are happy to offer advice and support to learners, parents/carers and families on effective strategies for maximising attendance. If you would like more details, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

If you or a member of your family are struggling with your wellbeing or mental health we are also providing support for our families at this time. Please do contact us and we can help you to access the support you need.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Fitzgibbon
Deputy Headteacher