November 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

**School Absenteeism**

Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that the school has to offer. At present the main reason for absenteeism at Kings Mill School is illness and as a school we are working hard to improve attendance, even in these challenging times.

We have a responsibility and legal obligation to report on all authorised and unauthorised absences that fall below 90% and we review pupil absence every half term. Individual pupils that fall below this level will be contacted by school to discuss medical needs and attendance levels so that appropriate support can be offered.

As parents you are responsible for informing school of your child’s absence. There are certain guidelines that we ask you to follow when your child is too ill to attend school:

* Report the reason for absence to the school office by 9.30 am on the first day of – this can be done by email (Kingsmill.specialschool@eastriding.gov.uk) or phone and an answer machine is available out of school hours.

Information given to us from Passenger Services regarding a child’s absence is not satisfactory notification; absence notification must come from parents and carers directly.

The school office will inform Kings Mill Residence if your child has a stay during the absence.

* Children with vomiting and/or diarrhoea should be kept at home for 48 hours after their symptoms have cleared.
* Update School on your child’s progress during the absence, up until day 5; after five days you must contact school with any medical advice given and when your child will return to school.

**Day 1 of absence** – School to be informed as soon as possible on the day of absence giving the reason for your child’s absence, any medical advice received relevant for school and when you expect your child to return to school.

**Day 3 of absence** – School to be updated on your child’s progress, any medical advice given and when your child will return to school if changed from initial information.

**Day 5 onwards** – Update school on your child’s progress regularly. Any absence for longer periods may need to be supported by medical evidence. For example, an appointment card/letter, medication or prescription etc. This does not equate to a doctor’s letter.

Think carefully before keeping your child from school for medical reasons. If they wake up saying they are unwell, consider whether the symptoms mean they have to stay at home. Do not keep your child away from school ‘just in case’ when they could be in class learning with their friends.

If your child requires a routine medical appointment they should be made outside of school hours whenever possible. However, if your child has an appointment in school time you should send the appointment card or the appointment letter to the school office so your child’s absence can be marked correctly in the school register. It is important that the office are informed if your child requires a school lunch on the day of a medical appointment and it is the parents responsibility to inform Passenger Services if transport is not required due to an appointment.

**Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

It remains very important for children and young people to continue to attend school, for their educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. Senior clinicians still advise that school is the best place for children to be, and so they should continue to go to school. The school has implemented a range of protective measures, in line with government and public health guidance, to help reduce the risks and keep them safe.

School attendance is now mandatory again. This means that it is your legal duty as a parent to send your child to school regularly. (There is not a corresponding legal duty for post-16 education)

If you have concerns about your child returning to school because you consider they may have particular risk factors, you should discuss these with the school. We will be able to then explain the ways we are changing things to reduce risks

**Self-isolation**

A small number of children and young people may be unable to attend in line with public health advice to self-isolate because they:

* have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves
* live with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive
* are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) and are requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace, the PHE advice service or school.

If your child is unable to attend school for these reasons, the school has a duty to support with remote learning.

**Shielding**

The UK Chief Medical Officers have issued a [statement on schools and childcare reopening](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-schools-and-childcare-reopening) which states that there is a very low rate of severe disease in children from coronavirus (COVID-19).

New advice for those identified through a letter from the NHS, or a specialist doctor, as being in the [clinically extremely vulnerable group (shielding list)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19) was published on 13 October. This includes advice on the additional measures these individuals can take tailored to the relevant local COVID alert level in their area.

It states that all children and young people should return to school or college at all local COVID alert levels, including if they:

* are clinically extremely vulnerable (unless they are one of the very small number of pupils under paediatric care (such as recent transplant or very immunosuppressed children) who have been advised specifically by their GP or clinician not to attend school)
* have family members or people in their household who are clinically extremely vulnerable

In the future, the government will only reintroduce formal restrictive shielding advice in exceptional circumstances in specific local areas at very high alert level. The government will write to families separately to inform them if this is the case and they are advised to follow formal shielding.

If children are not able to attend school because they are following clinical and/or public health advice, you will not be penalised and this will not count towards your child’s level of absenteeism.

If you have any queries regarding any absence matters please call the school office.

Yours sincerely

School Admin Team