

5<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents / carers

We understand that some parents will have a range of concerns regarding the forthcoming lockdown, but at this time schools are remaining open.

All schools must follow the governments guidance and legislation, and both are clearly saying that from the start of the new academic year in September 2020, the law regarding school attendance was re-applied. School attendance has once again become mandatory. This means that the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends regularly at school
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

The Principal has the discretion to authorise absence if he/she feels it would be appropriate to do so, as they would be best placed to know their pupils.

There is an understanding that some people with recognised medical conditions will need to take more care. If a medical condition fits this category, then a medical professional would have written to that individual or would be prepared to do so. The guidance states:

*"The government will only reintroduce formal shielding advice in the very worst affected local areas and for a limited period of time. The government will write to you separately to inform you if you are advised to shield. You are not advised to follow formal shielding advice again unless you receive a new shielding notification advising you to do so. All pupils and students should continue to attend education settings unless they are one of the very small number of pupils or students under paediatric or other specialist care and have been advised by their GP or clinician not to attend an education setting."*

In Bristol, penalty notices are requested directly by the school in accordance with the local Code of Conduct which can be found here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare>

We encourage you to speak to and work with your child's school, as they are best placed to advise and provide you with any support. The new guidance for schools was released yesterday. Here is the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-early-years>

Yours faithfully



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