Drafted August 2020

Consultation: September 2020  
Ratified:

Killowen Primary School

Attendance Policy

**Introduction**

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Killowen Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

**Mission Statement**

We, the Governors and staff of Killowen Primary School, believe the school to be a vital part of our Parish community. We are firmly committed to:

* The aims of Catholic Education;
* Providing appropriate and effective learning opportunities for all our children;
* Protecting children from physical, social, emotional and intellectual harm and providing them with the skills to cope with possible threats to their personal safety in all aspects of their lives.
* Promoting tolerance, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others
* Supporting the development of warm, sincere, positive relationships between children, staff and parents.

**Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Killowen Primary School.

2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.

3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.

4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

**Roles and responsibilities**

1. **Role of the School**

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance;

Teachers/designated staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

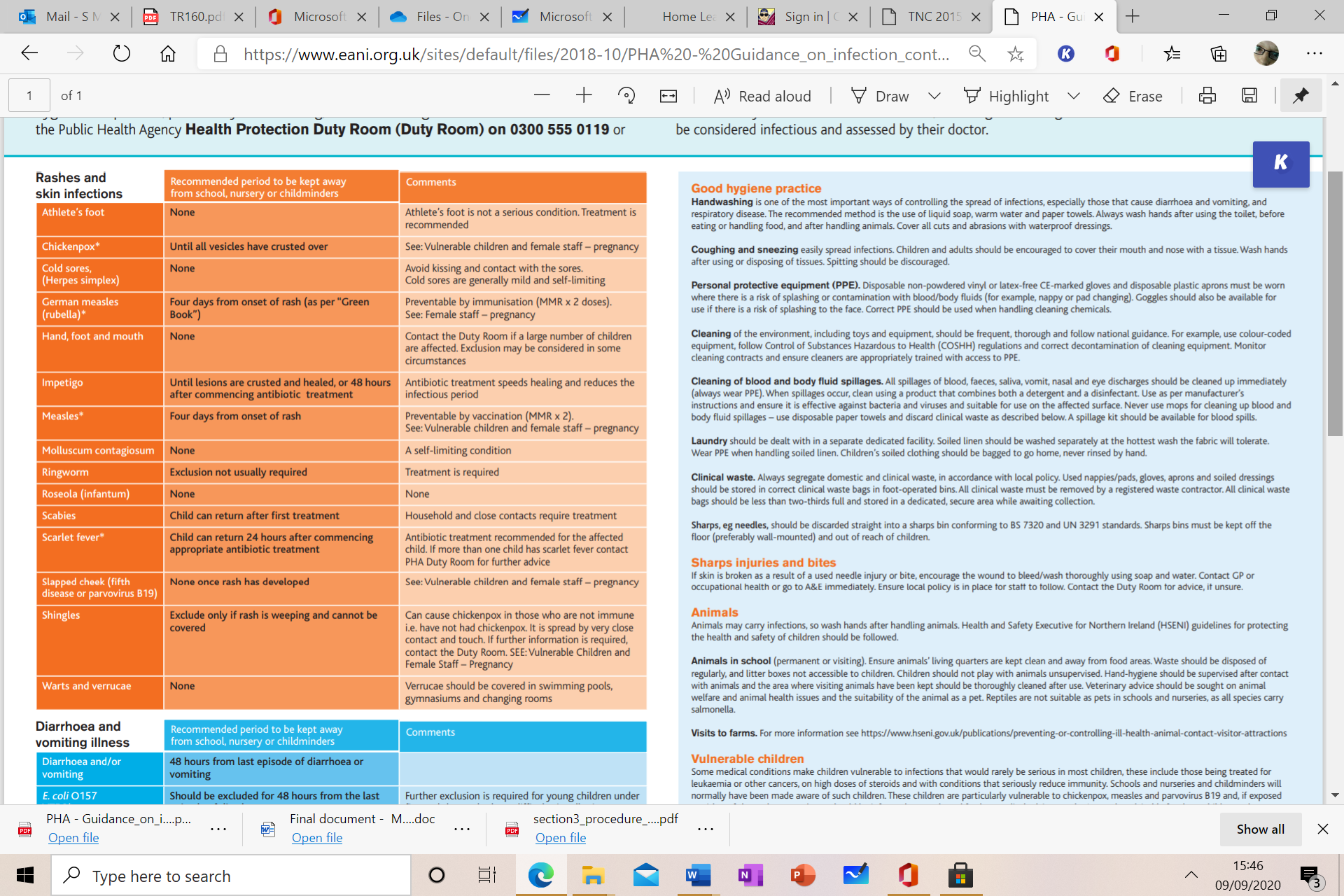
Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions, this is communicated to our school secretary who records absences on SIMS.

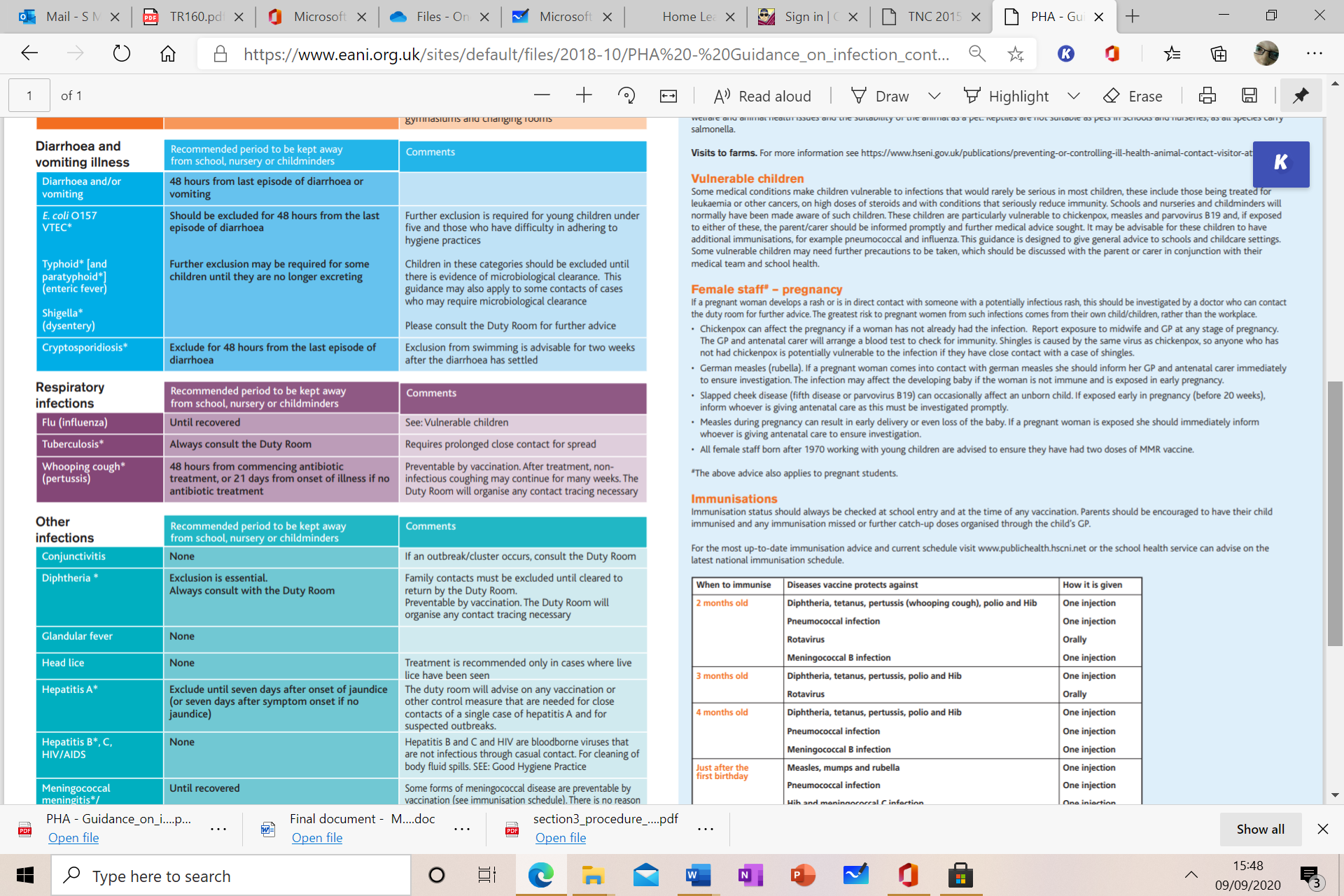
To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link: [www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools)

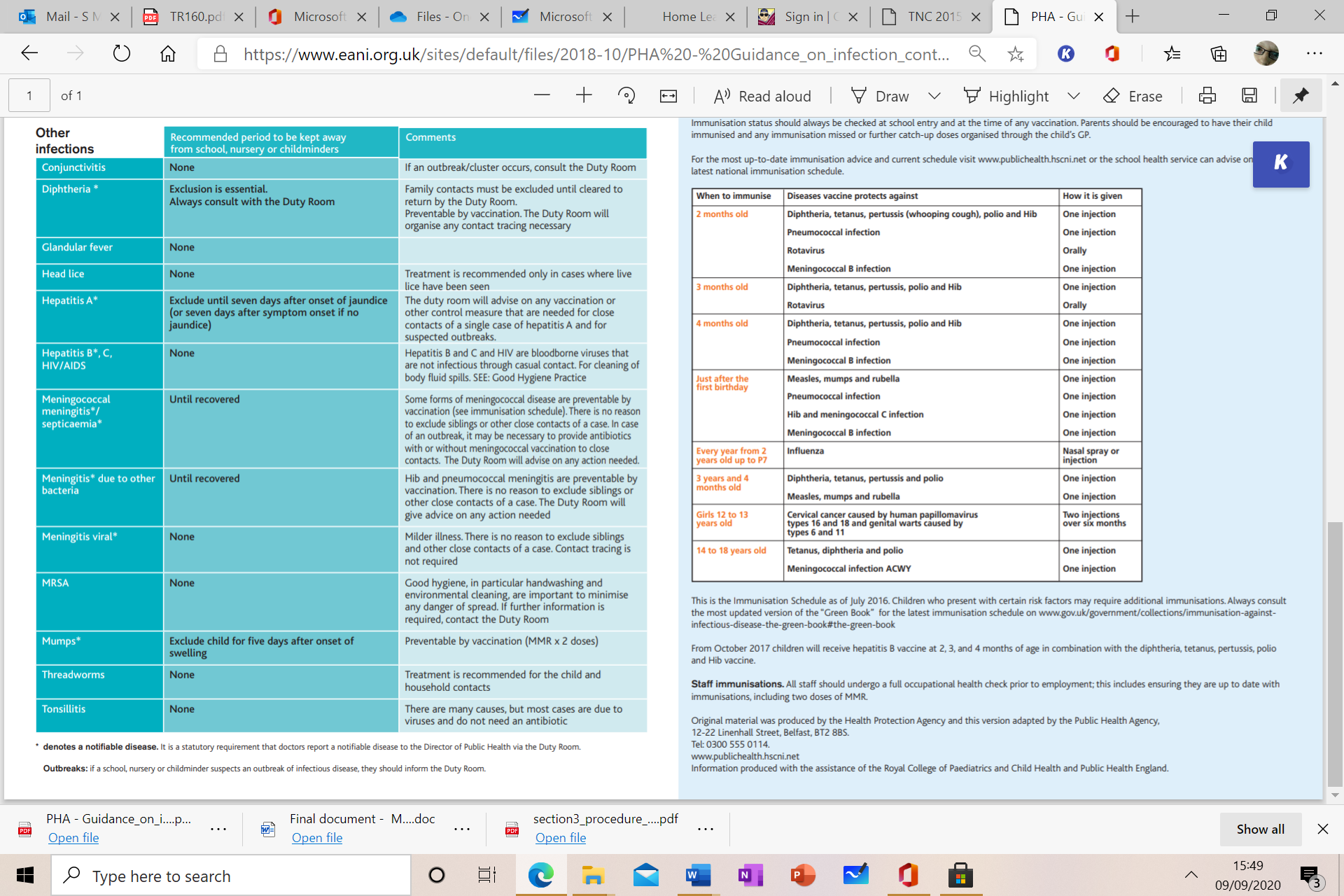
Killowen Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance. Where issues arise, the management and staff will take into account challenges faced by families and will work with families to help mitigate the impact of these. However, this commitment must be reciprocated fully with agreed measures being supported and implemented.

Where a pupil has sustained absence due to medical needs, additional support will be sought for that pupil through consultation with EA. Viability of home-schooling will be assessed and implemented as necessary.

PHA and GP guidance should ALWAYS be adhered to fully when deciding whether your child is well enough to attend school:







**Taken from PHA guidance on Infection control in schools:**

<https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/PHA%20-%20Guidance_on_infection_control_in%20schools_poster.pdf>

**2 Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil’s absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school or by email at the earliest opportunity. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at the allocated time for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual.

Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child’s attendance record. If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

**Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Killowen Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

**Absence Procedures**

(Each school should insert own procedures for reporting absence, monitoring, medical appointments etc)

All parents/carers are required to provide written note, either hand written or via email, which provides a clear reason for any absence.

**Family holidays during Term Time**

Killowen Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils’ learning. Family holidays taken during term time which do not have an obvious and focused educational benefit will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. 1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

**Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

Pupils may be routinely be asked about non-attendance and late arrival. They will be encouraged to take steps to play their part in making sure they do not miss school and do not contribute to tardiness.

Should a pattern of non-attendance emerge, parents/ guardians will be contacted by phone to provide an explanation and will be informed of impact on overall attendance percentages. They will be reminded that the school will be monitoring pupil attendance to ensure it improves.

Where attendance does not improve, parents/ guardians will be contacted by letter (hard copy or email) and will be reminded of their duty to ensure their child receives a full education. They will be informed of what the next steps will be if pupil attendance does not improve. This will include automatic referral to Education and Welfare Service should attendance fall below 85%.

**Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children’s education. If a pupil’s absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

This policy will be reviewed and updated in light of any DE/ EA/ CCMS guidance.

Principal: Sheila McKeown

Chairman: Tony McCusker

**COVID ANNEX 2020**

All PHA guidelines must be adhered to fully in relation to Covid-19:

Where a pupil or family is isolating due to:

* Experiencing symptoms of Covid
* A family member experiencing symptoms of Covid
* A directive to self-isolate by GP/ PHA/ a sibling’s school on behalf of PHA
* Quarantine after returning from a country listed by Executive as requiring quarantine measures

parents **must** inform the school at the earliest opportunity either by: phone or email. The school should be informed of any developments in symptoms/ advice given by GP/ PHA/ Test and Trace services.

Where a pupil/ family is having to isolate whilst awaiting testing/ following contact with a positive case/ is experiencing or has a family member experiencing symptoms of Covid-19, they can -if they are well enough – access learning support materials via the ‘Home Learning’ section of the school website under ‘Absence Activities’.

If this absence extends beyond one week, they should consult the learning material provided under weekly headings, continue to undertake the work set via Seesaw Class app or contact their child(ren’s) class teacher via email directly to seek materials/ advice- **subject to the pupil health and ability to undertake learning activities.**

If families are unable to print these materials at home and their child/family is likely to be absent for over a week they can contact the school directly by phone or email and we will endeavour to post copies of these absence activities out to them – this is subject to change if staffing issues arise because quarantine/ self-isolation directives.

**Attendance of pupils with clinical vulnerabilities/ family members with clinical vulnerabilities.**

**Pupils Who Are Clinically Vulnerable**

* We are following the latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions or who live with individuals who have health conditions or are pregnant. Current guidance on these categories is published on NI Direct and by PHA here. If in doubt, specific advice should be sought from a Hospital Consultant or GP.
* In light of the Minister’s statement 6th August, clarifying “that having taken account of the scientific and medical evidence, it is now appropriate for all pupils to return to school during the week commencing 31 August” we would consider attendance to be mandatory.
* There will be a small number of children where medical guidance would be to refrain from school. We would request that where this is the case, through evidence provided by the family that the pupil is shielding due to underlying medical conditions. If evidence is not received then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

**Pupils Who Live with Someone Who is Clinically Vulnerable**

* If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable as above), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Hospital Consultant or GP of the clinically vulnerable person.

**Pupils Who Were Shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people)**

* Advice with regard to shielding eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 ‘shielding’ has been paused. Pupil should follow the guidance of their hospital consultant or GP if in doubt about school attendance.

**Recording Attendance**

* Specific guidance in respect of pupil attendance whether at school or at home will be issued separately, see Circular DE2020/08 on the DE website.
* Decisions regarding the recording of pupil attendance will be down to schools and the individual circumstances of each child. It may be possible for some children to continue to learn from home due to being clinically vulnerable if they are able to provide evidence of an underlying medical condition as well as learning at home. If evidence cannot be provided in terms of either the specific medical condition or that learning is not being completed then school should record attendance as an unauthorised absence (Codes D, H or N) where appropriate.