



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed and updated autumn 2024 | Next review autumn 2025

Headmistress	Olwen Wright	
Senior Attendance Champion	Claire Huyton	Claire.Huyton@Stnicholas.school
Attendance Champions	Nichola Byrne Chinn Lee Render Helen Barnes	nicola.byrne-chinn@stnicholas.school lee.render@stnicholas.school helen.barnes@stnicholas.school

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all members of our school community. The School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity policy document. The School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

This document is available to all interested parties on request from the School's office and on the school website and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: Admissions Policy, Missing Pupil and Child Protection Policies. This document is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head Pastoral, or as events, legislation or procedural change requires. The School is committed to ensuring that the attendance register is maintained in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016, and the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (2024).

Importance of Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

The School's responsibility

At St Nicholas school we will endeavour to;

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support.
- The school will regularly inform parents of their child's attendance via their school report and the iSAMS parent portal.

The Parent's Responsibility;

- All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school.
- Pupils are to arrive at school by 8:30am
- Parents must inform the school of any absence, including the reason for absence before 8:45am by either calling or emailing the school office.
- If a parent is struggling to get their child to school for any reason, they should arrange a meeting with the Head of Phase to discuss what further support can be put in place.

Attendance Register

The law requires all schools, including independent schools, to have both an admissions register and an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of age) must be placed on both registers. The School's Attendance Register is kept electronically using iSAMS. Attendance registers are to be kept for at least six years from the date the data was entered. Paper copies of the registers can be printed at any time and summary statements of individual pupils is possible, should they be required. The attendance register contains the pupil's class/form group and an indication of whether the pupil is present or absent at any given morning or afternoon session.

Pupil absences are followed up promptly, on the day of absence, and parents are required to notify absences in accordance with the procedures set out below.

The School's Registrar, along with nominated support staff, are the only people authorised to put a new pupil on the register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. It should be noted that the Admissions Register and Attendance Register share the same MIS.

The School's Attendance Register must include the following:

- The pupil's class/form group
- Whether the pupil is absent or present at any given morning/afternoon session
- Information about authorised and unauthorised absences including:
 - a) Attending an approved educational activity outside school (approved by the Head and supervised by a person approved by the Head, and including work experience or sporting activity)
 - b) Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (such as unavoidable closure of the school site or failure of the School's transport system where the home is not within walking distance)

- c) Taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the Head; unable to attend due to sickness; religious observance by the religious body the parent belongs)
- d) Taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later).

All members of teaching staff are familiar with the procedure for taking a register in iSAMS. For all pupils, the attendance register must be completed at the start of each morning session and afternoon sessions. It must show whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity outside school (approved by the Head and supervised by a person approved by the Head, including work experience or sporting activity);
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Registers will remain open for 20min. If a pupil is late during this time they should be marked at 'L' in the register alongside a note of the number of minutes late. If a pupil arrives after the registration has closed they should be marked as 'U'.

The School will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to be used before entering it on to the School's electronic register (MIS).

A pupil may be marked in the attendance register as unable to attend because of exceptional circumstances where the school site, or part of it, is closed or where transport normally provided for that pupil by the school or the local authority is unavailable. Where a pupil is attending another school at which he/she is a registered pupil he/she must be marked in the attendance register as attending an approved educational activity. DfE has a standard set of codes for schools to use in registers which can be found in Appendix A.

An attendance register will be taken at every lesson transition where the class is taken by a new member of staff. Registers will remain open for 10min at the start of the lesson with any lateness marked as 'L' and the number of minutes late logged. After 10min the pupil will be marked as 'N' absent and, if the pupil has been in earlier lessons, an ALERT will be sent to the office and key staff members through iSAMS. Lesson registers will not be used when calculating a pupil's overall attendance.

Absence and attendee codes

Pupils will not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes. A full list of codes can be found in Appendix A.

Where Code N is entered into the register the school will endeavour to contact parents to understand why the pupil is absent. The correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained, but no longer than 5 working days after the session.

Absence procedures

Parents who wish to request a short period of absence (e.g. for a medical appointment) are asked to notify the Form Tutor and the School Office.

Parents who wish to request a longer period of absence (e.g. family bereavement) are asked to email the Head to request permission.

Parents are asked to let the School Office know if their child is absent and provide a reason, for example, because they are sick. Parents are asked to telephone on the first day of absence, in the morning by 09.00am. If a child arrives late to school or has missed registration their attendance will be tracked as soon as they attend their first lesson.

After registration closes, the School office team will check registers to ensure all pupils are present and any unexpected non-attendance is followed up. If the absentee has siblings at the school, a member of staff would check the register to see if the siblings are also absent.

By 10.00am, if the child is unaccounted for and the parent has not contacted the school, then an attempt will be made by the School Office to contact the parents by telephone in the first instance and then by email if there is no response from a telephone call. Two emergency telephone numbers are held for each pupil on the School's MIS. Parents will be contacted each day the pupil is absent if the school has not been provided with a reason, for safeguarding purposes.

Granting leaves of absence

The school can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances include;

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. In the following circumstances a pupil can be absent from the school site without it being classified as absence for statistical purposes;

- To attend an offsite approved educational activity
- To attend provision arranged by the local authority e.g. as part of an EHCP
- To participate in an approved sporting activity
- To attend an educational visit or trip
- To attend work experience.

Monitoring absence

The school will run half termly reports to look for patterns of absence amongst different cohorts within the school. The form tutor and registration team are responsible for monitoring individual attendance and flagging prolonged absence or frequent absence to the Heads of Phase and Attendance Champions.

Children who are absent from education

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. A child being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, and a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation or mental health problems. The Deputy Head Pastoral will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children are absent or go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

The School will report a pupil who;

- has ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence),
- failures to attend regularly,
- is deleted from the school register, due to leaving the school at non-standard leaving points or when the next school is not known. In this last case, we are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible.

They will follow set procedures and notify the Deputy Head Pastoral as necessary.

To facilitate effective working across the local authority area, the school will inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

Barriers to attendance

The school's attendance champions will work with the parents and the pupil to understand any barriers to attendance. Where these lie within the school's control, every effort will be made to work with the parent and pupil to address these barriers. Where these barriers lie outside the school's control, the school will agree interventions and actions with the parents, which may include referrals to services and organisations which can provide support. Where absence intensifies the school will work in tandem with the local authority and Early Help. Where voluntary support has not been effective or engaged with, the school will work with the local authority to put more formal measures in place.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. The school will work with families to mitigate anxious feelings around school.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff will work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. This may be by:

- Facilitating any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, the school will:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Work in partnership with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate.

If the child has an education health and care plan, the school will:

- Communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls, or they become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Where possible agree adjustments to its policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision set out in the education health and care plan in collaboration with parents.
- Where needed work with the local authority to review and amend the education health and care plan to incorporate the additional or different attendance support identified.
- Where parents do not engage in support, schools should work with the local authority or other local partners to formalise that support.

Part time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for a pupil to follow a part time timetable for a period of time to meet their individual needs.

A part-time timetable will:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

Persistent or severe absence

Where a child is missing 10% or more of school within a term the school is required to inform the local authorities. Severe absence, considered to be 50% or more, may require more intensive support across a range of partners with an attendance or whole family plan. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. The school will work with the local authorities to provide this support. Where this support is not successful the local authority may choose to progress this to an Education Supervision Order (ESO) through the Family or High Court. This gives the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000. If the child continues to fail to attend school the parents may be face with a notice to improve, penalty notice or liable to prosecution. The decision on how to proceed lies solely with the local authority.

Appendix A Attendance code

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon.

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed.

The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.

The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).

A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision, examples are:

- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision.

Schools should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the education provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip.

The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if:

- the place is somewhere other than the school,
- the activity is of an educational nature;
- the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity;
- the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Supervision means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition.

If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. The final decision on approving the activity, however, rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code W: Attending work experience

The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education. The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if:

- the place is somewhere other than the school,
- the activity is of an educational nature;
- the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity;
- the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Supervision means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition.

Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the work experience notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if;

- the place is somewhere other than the school,
- the activity is of an educational nature;
- the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity;

- the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Supervision means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity (regulation 10(5)), examples are:
 - attending transition days at other schools;
- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school.

Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only do so in the following circumstances;

- Where the local authority have granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a pupil does not need a licence for such a performance because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place or the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Where a local authority licence specifies the dates that a pupil is to be away from school to perform, the school should record the absence for those days as if a leave of absence had been applied for and granted. Where the terms of the local authority licence do not specify dates, however, or where a BOPA or other exemption or licence from a Justice of the Peace applies, it is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a pupil who is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or work abroad under a licence or exemption as described above. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

If a pupil is present at registration but then leaves the school to attend a medical or dental appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence) and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution. This interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.

For a pupil to study for a public examination where the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence). Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and should be used sparingly. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.

For a pupil not of compulsory school age to attend school part-time. Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, to temporarily reduce the timetable of a pupil of compulsory school age to part-time, if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school.

Code D: Dual registered at another school

The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in

place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt over the reason given, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence. Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement.

Code R: Religious observance

The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to record the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C. Schools and local authorities may seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as:

- Setting term dates around days for religious observance;
- Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance;
- Taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days;
- Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question. In the majority of cases a parent’s notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.

Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, schools should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. Schools should be mindful that requesting additional medical evidence unnecessarily places pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointment system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, schools should take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school should have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds.

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and they have not done so, or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live. These circumstances are set out in law but in summary are where:

- the local authority has a duty to arrange the pupil’s home to school travel and has not; or
- the pupil is registered at a private school that is beyond walking distance from the pupil’s home and the local authority has not arranged boarding for them or enabled them to go to a state school nearer to their home.
- This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available. Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3

miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be recorded with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:

- in police detention,
- remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
- detained under a sentence of detention.

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend. Meaning, the pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:

- contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), or
- prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must

be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established.

Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session. Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. Registers will remain open for 20min, pupils arriving after this time the pupil will be marked at U. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Most school admissions involve the school or admission authority offering a place to the parent of the prospective pupil. An offer of a place is not an agreement. Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or by the fact of the pupil attending the school on that day.

Code #: Planned whole school closure

Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:

- days between terms;
- half terms;
- occasional days (for example, bank holidays);

- weekends (where it is required by the management information system);
- up to 5 non-educational days; and
- use of the whole school as a polling station.

This code is not collected for statistical purpose.