



Arnbrook Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

2021 - 2022

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### 1. School aims:

- All pupils and their families to value their education;
- Few pupils are absent or persistently absent.
- Pupils are punctual and rarely late.
- No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is showing marked and sustained improvement.

### 2. School Objectives:

- To ensure a consistent approach to registration
- To monitor lateness and follow it up consistently
- To adopt a positive approach to promoting attendance and punctuality via rewards
- To reduce persistent absentees, including those persistent absentees who are disadvantaged.
- To provide strong support and robust action for parents of children whose lateness or attendance is a concern

### 3. Legislation and Guidance:

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
  - [The Education Act 2002](#)
  - [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
  - [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 4. Rationale

Children can only achieve their full intellectual potential if they arrive at school regularly and on time. The effect of poor attendance and late arrival is apparent in the achievement children as early as the Foundation Stage.

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital every child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 96%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders do not miss out on learning experiences and opportunities
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities:**

### Responsibilities of Teachers

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately & on time, seeking reasons for absence where necessary.
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the appropriate member of staff on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate with pupils and parents/carers regarding absences and poor punctuality.

### Responsibilities of Pupils:

- Attend every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Arrive in your classroom on time, every day.

### Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- Ensure your child attends school every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
- Ensure your child arrives in their classroom on time, every day.
- In the event of being late, take your child to the main entrance and sign your child into school at the Attendance Office and include a reason for lateness.
- In the event of any absence, inform the school on the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence by phone 01159 649 388 or by emailing [attendanceofficer@arnbrookprimary.net](mailto:attendanceofficer@arnbrookprimary.net).
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Provide written/text message medical evidence to support any absence if requested by the school.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance - ensuring our school procedures are followed.

**Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers' legal responsibility as per the Education Act 1996 Section 444 and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.**

# School Procedures

## 6. Attendance Registration (am and pm)

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

(See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes)

- School opens at 8.40am, School gates close at 8.50am promptly, children must be in their class by 8:50am. Registers are open from 8.50am and are completed and closed by 9.00am.
- Teaching staff will register children accurately, as this is a legal requirement.
- All absences are investigated by our Attendance Support Worker. If no reason is forthcoming from parents/carers regarding an absence, then the parents receive a text message asking for a reason for absence. If there is no response to this text, parents are phoned. If there is no response to the phone call, a voicemail message is left where possible and a Class Dojo message is sent. We contact emergency contacts if we are unable to contact parents. This process is repeated for each day of the absence if no response is given to ascertain why a child is absent. Class teachers also follow up any unexplained absences when a child returns to school.
- If we are unable to establish a reason for absence and the absence procedures outlined above have taken place, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence, the school senior leadership will visit the address of the pupil to check on the pupil's welfare. In some cases, this may take place at any stage of the absence and this will be determined by individual risk assessments being made. Consideration will be given to inform the Local Authority if there are any concerns.
- Afternoon registration is at 1:00pm and closes at 1.10pm
- Attendance registers are kept electronically.
- Arnbrook Primary School complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes (see appendix 1)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/907535/School\\_attendance\\_guidance\\_for\\_2020\\_to\\_2021\\_academic\\_year.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf)

## 7. Punctuality & Lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start to the school day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. We are unable to take responsibility for children on the school premises before 8:40am which is the time when all doors to classrooms open. It is very important that children do not play on the play equipment before or after school as there is no supervision at these times. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

- Classroom doors open at 8.40am. School gates close at 8.50am promptly; children must be in their classroom by 8:50am. If children arrive at school after 8:50am, they must be brought into school via the school office by an adult and sign in. If the register has closed this late will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The Attendance Office will ascertain reasons for late arrivals.
- Where a child is arriving late, the parents receive a text message/Dojo message to remind them of the importance of good punctuality.

- If a child arrives at school late on two or more occasions during a week, the parents are sent a letter reminding them of the importance of good punctuality. If this is repeated again during the half term, a second letter is sent. If this continues for a third week during the half term, the parent is sent a third letter inviting them to a meeting with the Head Teacher.
- If after the meeting has been held, and the lateness continues, this could lead to a referral being made by the school for a Penalty Notice to be issued to both parents for failure to ensure regular attendance.
- Support will be given to families (i.e. home visits/review meetings/free breakfast club places offered) as far as possible within the resources available to the school but children will not be directly collected from home by staff members other than in extremely exceptional circumstances.
- Children identified as persistently late will be given a punctuality chart to monitor their punctuality and this will earn them a reward if improvement is seen.

## **8. Authorised & Unauthorised Absences**

### **Absences**

Only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise a child's absence. It is a statutory requirement for the Head Teacher to decide with every absence and decide whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence, before 8:30am if possible, on our attendance phone line 01159 649 388 and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence following the procedure below: This phone line is staffed from 8.00am - 11:00am. If you are calling outside these times, or no-one is available, then please leave a voicemail message with the following information:

- Name of your child (please spell if necessary)
- Name of class
- The relationship to the child of the person who is reporting the absence
- Callers must provide the reason for absence or exact nature of their child's illness. We cannot accept the following reasons for absence: illness, feeling poorly, feeling under the weather or tired. In order to authorise the absence, we need to know exactly what is wrong with your child.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

The Head Teacher reserves the right to declare any absence unauthorised if:

- there is no explanation given;
- the explanation is not reasonable for the absence;
- the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school e.g. a cold
- Illness of a family member
- Bus not running or car broken down

### **Authorised Absence**

Absence may be authorised for Religious Observance. Arnbrook Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends. Arnbrook Primary School follow Nottingham City's Common Attendance Protocols to determine whether we are able to authorise an absence linked to a religious observance. In these circumstances, parents and carers should request a leave of absence following the procedure below.

There are other, infrequent, occasions where absences are permitted and coded as 'Authorised Circumstances'. This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement. Parents/carers should communicate with school if there are such circumstances. The Head Teacher's decision is final in such matters.

### **Illness**

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. Parents must provide the exact nature of their child's illness. We cannot accept; illness, poorly, feeling under the weather or tired. In order to authorise the absence, we need to know exactly what is wrong with your child. In some circumstances we may request further evidence of a child's illness to allow the absence to be authorised. We reserve the right to seek additional evidence related to the illness if we have any concerns regarding a child's attendance. In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is lower than 96%
- There are frequent odd days of absence due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.
- When absences occur either side of a school holiday or weekend.

Arnbrook Primary School follows the guidelines from the Public Health Agency on '[infection control in schools and other childcare settings](#)' which outlines the recommended period to be kept away from nursery/school. Pupils who are absent for a period of time longer than that recommended may have these additional absences unauthorised.

### **Medical Appointments**

Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments e.g. medical / dental outside of school time. If this is not possible, please give us as much notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip/text confirmation.

## **9. Unexplained Absence - Safeguarding & Children Missing Education**

### **Children Missing Education**

Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. The DSL, in conjunction with the attendance team, will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. At least two different contact numbers will be held on file for a child which can be accessed and used by the school in case of an absence/emergency. Should a child be linked to outside agencies and have a Child Protection Plan the Social Worker will be informed immediately should absence occur.

**If a child is absent from school and we have had no contact with them after efforts have been made to determine their whereabouts and we are unable to locate them and we believe that the family may have moved away leaving no contact details to find them, we will alert Nottinghamshire CME immediately.**

All absences that are not accounted for will be actioned immediately by our Attendance Officer following the procedures below.

During Days 1-3 of any pupil absence which is not accounted for (no contact between home-school/no reason provided for absence), the following procedure is followed:

- All absences are investigated by our Attendance Support Worker. If no reason is forthcoming from parents/carers regarding an absence, then the parents receive a text message asking for a reason for absence. If there is no response to this text, parents are phoned. If there is no response to the phone call, a voicemail message is left where possible and a Class Dojo message is sent. We contact emergency contacts if we are unable to contact parents. This process is repeated for each day of the absence if no response is given to ascertain why a child is absent. Class teachers also follow up any unexplained absences when a child returns to school.
- If we are unable to establish a reason for absence and the absence procedures outlined above have taken place, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence, the school senior leadership will visit the address of the pupil to check on the pupil's welfare. In some cases, this may take place at any stage of the absence and this will be determined by individual risk assessments being made. Consideration will be given to inform the Local Authority if there are any concerns.

Where a pupil who fails to attend regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of more than 3 school days, the school follows the Nottinghamshire County Council's attendance procedures (see below).

The school uses contextual safeguarding information to assess the risk level around any unexplained absence and reserves the right to carry out safe and well checks and home visits as and when appropriate at any point within a period of absence, to locate and establish whereabouts of the child and assess their safety and wellbeing.

Staff will use their professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the child's whereabouts before notifying the police. Parents/carers will always be informed before contact with the police is made, unless a child is at immediate risk of harm and a police response is needed. This will be judged on a case by case basis.

At all times, school staff will liaise with the relevant colleagues in safeguarding/education within Nottinghamshire County Council for pupils who are to be removed from the admission register and include circumstances where the pupil:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education – this will be communicated with the home elective education team
- does not arrive at the school as part of an admission process and we are not aware of their whereabouts
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered and has been discussed with the children missing officer (CMO) as they have not been registered at a new school

Where reasonably possible, all schools and colleges must hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This will enable us to make contact with a 'responsible adult' should a child be missing from education or a welfare or safeguarding issue or concern is identified. (KCSIE 2021)

## **10. Leave of Absence in Term Time**

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head Teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Exceptional circumstances being defined as being unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.



- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter may be referred to Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. Arnbrook Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will only be authorised if school feel there are exceptional circumstances.

Leave of Absence which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised and does not count as exceptional circumstance:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake or without checking
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a family wedding
- Family birthdays
- Availability of time off work
- Day trips
- Holidays taken without following school procedure
- Family time

Parent/carers must follow school procedures when requesting leave of absence for their child:

- Requests should be made at least 4 school weeks in advance of the proposed absence, by completing a Leave of Absence request form, available from the Attendance Officer. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.
- A letter should be addressed to the Attendance Officer explaining why the leave is essential and the reasons why it needs to take place during term time.
- Written travel documentation and accommodation details must be supplied before a request can be considered.
- Once the decision has been made by the school it cannot be reversed and there is no appeals procedure. The Head Teacher's decision is final.
- If the Head Teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absence, a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.
- If the Head Teacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a reply informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent/carer.
- If the decision is to not authorise the leave of absence and the child is absent from school, in all cases the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice to both parents; there is no appeal process.

There is no right of appeal against an Education Penalty Notice once it has been issued correctly and in line with the Nottingham City Code of Conduct. Penalty Notice fines can only be withdrawn in specific circumstances as set out within the national regulations and the local code of conduct. If a parent believes that the reason for their child's unauthorised leave of absence from

school in term time was not properly understood and that it should have been considered as exceptional by the Head Teacher then the parent/carer should contact the school to discuss the matter and, if still not satisfied, follow the complaints procedure. The local authority cannot overturn a Head Teacher's decision to unauthorise a pupil's absence from school during term time.

**Instances where parents/carers don't inform school of reason for absence, or give a false reason, can still result in a penalty notice being issued if school have reasonable grounds to believe the absence wasn't due to illness/exceptional circumstances.**

**Arnbrook Primary School reserve the right to carry out home visits and contact parents/carers either via phone/Class Dojo or post to establish the correct reason for absence. If parents/carers take their children on any unauthorised holiday, school reserve the right to refuse to authorise any further absences for the remainder of the year without medical evidence and the pupils' attendance will be subject to additional monitoring.**

### **11. Tackling Poor Attendance and Punctuality (including Persistent Absenteeism)**

Tackling poor attendance and punctuality (including persistent absenteeism) is a high priority for the school. Staff within the school's attendance team, alongside school leaders, analyse pupil attendance proactively on an ongoing basis.

All parents and carers are sent a half termly attendance summary of their child(ren), indicating their attendance for the year to date and which band this is within.

If a child's attendance falls below 93%, parents/carers are sent a letter explaining that their child's attendance is a cause for concern.

If a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers are sent a letter explaining that their child is now classed as a 'persistent absentee'. They are informed that school will not authorise any further absences until further notice, unless provided with medical evidence and that they may be invited to an attendance meeting to discuss how to improve the situation.

Parents/carers are informed about the risk of being referred for a penalty notice if their child's attendance does not improve and/or there are further unauthorised absences.

Parents/carers are reminded to contact school if they need any support or wish to discuss the matter further. School staff will also consider whether support (either internal or external) is appropriate and act accordingly. This may come in the form of, but is not limited to; school minibuss service, support with parenting and behaviour management, and referral to outside agencies such as 'Early Help'.

Their child's attendance will be monitored on a daily basis and parents/carers will receive a weekly update on their child's attendance until further notice. Parents/carers with pupils with attendance below 93% may also be subject to additional home visits if their child is absent and meetings to discuss their child's attendance. If a child's attendance remains poor or falls below 90%, then the following procedure is followed:

- Attendance Officer will write to the parent and invite them into school for a meeting to discuss their child's absences, during this meeting they will be informed that their child's attendance is a major cause for concern and that if it persists, they will be referred to the Attendance Enforcement Team at either Nottingham City Council or Nottinghamshire County Council (depending on pupils' address). They are reminded that school will not authorise any absences until further notice, unless provided with medical evidence. At the meeting, means of supporting the family and improving attendance are discussed and an action plan agreed. If a parent fails to attend the arranged meeting the Attendance Officer will write to the parents informing them of the above.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority (see section below).

**Any pupil with 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a rolling 10-week period (this can include lateness after the register has closed) can be referred to the local authority for additional support / action from Education Welfare.**

This may result in Penalty Notices for each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies. In these cases, the Local Authority may also consider what services or measures may be provided to prevent or reduce further unauthorised absence including support and interventions through the Family Service. Local Authority Attendance Specialists work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

At all stages, the attendance support worker and attendance lead will liaise with the DSL and deputy DSLs and make any necessary safeguarding and/or early help referrals if necessary. The school will support all families and pupils with ensuring pupils are at school on time, every day, far as resources allow, recognising that ultimately, a child's attendance at school is the responsibility of the parent.

## **12. Other approaches promoting attendance**

- The school will give high profile to awards for attendance and punctuality in weekly assemblies every Friday. The school will value good punctuality and attendance by an award to the class with the lowest number of late marks and highest attendance each week, across the whole school.
- The school will give termly certificates to all children achieving 100% attendance with no late arrivals recorded. Every child's name will be entered into a draw for the chance to win prizes.
- The children with the most improved attendance over the term will be entered into the draw for the chance to win prizes.
- Any children achieving 100% attendance for the year will have the chance to win a prize at the end of the year
- We will be implementing termly prizes for children with the most improved attendance as well as 100% attenders. These will include, but not limited to, cinema evenings and parties.
- At the end of the year, the class with the highest attendance across school will be rewarded with a class prize.
- During the Autumn and Spring Attendance drives (a two-week period identified as having lower attendance across school) children who achieve 100% attendance with no lates will be rewarded with prizes.
- The attendance and punctuality school displays, will be used to celebrate achievements and communicate important information to parents and children at home.

## **13. Monitoring & Reviewing Attendance**

- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed to ensure that improvements are being made across the school, especially for key groups of pupils e.g. disadvantaged pupils.
- Whole school attendance data is included within school Dojo posts. It is also communicated to staff through weekly emails following discussions at Senior Leadership meetings. The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer meet weekly to review attendance across the school. This information is disseminated to all staff.
- The Head Teacher will present figures on attendance to the Governing Body/Board every term.
- Attendance figures, expressed as a percentage, will be included on the annual report of every child and, where there has been an attendance problem, the Head Teacher and class teacher will draw attention to it in his/her comments.

**Linked Policies** – Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy

**Key documents** – Keeping children safe in Education (2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Children Missing Education (2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Useful Website – Nottingham City School Attendance <http://www.nottinghamschools.org.uk/pupil-support/education-welfare>

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Absence and Attendance Codes**

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

**The codes are:**

**Present at School**

Pupils must 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.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm  
Present in school during registration.

**Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed**

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with **code U**, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

**Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

**Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:**

**Code B: Off-site educational activity**

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

**Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled 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. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

**Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

**Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

**Code V: Educational visit or trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

**Code W: Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

### **Authorised Absence from School**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:**

#### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

#### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

#### **Code H: Holiday authorised by the school**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

#### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

#### **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

#### **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

#### **Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

#### **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

## **COVID-19 Attendance Addendum - September 2021**

**To be read in conjunction with the school's safeguarding policy and COVID safeguarding addendum**

This addendum is written in accordance to the following government document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

### **Attendance expectations**

School attendance is mandatory for all pupils. It is vital for all children attend school to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. As the parent/legal guardian, it is your duty to ensure your child attends regularly at school (where your child is a registered pupil at school, and they are of compulsory school age). It is the school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence. The local authority will continue to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

### **Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19**

This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

## Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply

In line with current legislation, and guidance from PHE (and its successor the UKHSA) and DHSC, examples are as follows:

### Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

- Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

### Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

- Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test, and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

### Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

- As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

### Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised

- Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.
- If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

### Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test

- In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register.
- Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

### Remote education

- If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

- We will continue to offer remote education for children who are self-isolating. Our aim is that children who are required to self-isolate are not disadvantaged educationally and therefore the remote education we offer will be as close to the provision in school as possible and we will ensure that all children can access high quality learning resources and support materials including access to educational videos and where possible, live lessons via Microsoft Teams. The remote education offer may differ depending on your child's age or educational needs. A full breakdown of this offer can be found within our 'Remote Education Plan' on our school website.

### **Safeguarding children when absent**

Any absence due to Covid-19 related reasons is monitored closely. The school will communicate expectations of what parents must do in the event of their child demonstrating symptoms and testing positive. Clear expectations are in place about expectations for communication from parents. Depending on the length of absence, which may well be determined by the time period for Covid test results to return or the nature of the Covid related absence, school will monitor the safeguarding of pupils with absences due to Covid19 related reasons via both engagements with remote learning and phone calls home. During week one of any absence, teachers will monitor engagement on Class Dojo. School requests a minimum of 3 engagements per week, one of which is a photo of the child engaging in work. During the second week of absence, phone calls will be made to check on a pupil's wellbeing. School will risk assess individual pupils who, subsequently, may be phoned more regularly through any absence to check on their wellbeing. Where no contact has been made, school will consider whether a home visit is required, taking into account the risks of doing this. School will engage with the Education Welfare Service and Children and Families Direct where the safety and wellbeing of a child is a matter of concern.

### **Holidays and Quarantine**

Many families will have taken a holiday over the summer period. The school is aware of escalated pricing structures in place by some holiday companies. Despite this, parents should always plan their holidays within school holidays and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Ultimately, local authorities and schools have a range of legal powers to enforce attendance if a child or young person misses school without a valid reason. If you have taken a holiday abroad over the summer, you should bear in mind the impact on your child's education which may result from any requirement to quarantine or isolate upon return. Please visit the link below for the latest government advice on quarantining upon returning from abroad: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>

### **Stepping Measures Up and Down**

If the local or national situation changes as a result of increased positive cases, we have contingency plans in place outlining how we would operate to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission. As per usual, we will be liaising with Public Health England for all positive cases in school. We will always follow the advice which is given. If the number of positive cases substantially increases we may have to act in line with our outbreak management plan. An example of stepping up measures may be a return to face coverings being worn on school site or a return to the one-way system being in place. We will continue to follow national and local advice on children's attendance in school.