



Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures

PARTNERSHIP OF DRONFIELD SCHOOLS (PODS)

Barlow C of E Primary School, Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School (DHFS), Dronfield Infant School, Dronfield Junior School, Gorseybrigg Primary School and Nursery, Holmesdale Infant School, Lenthall Infant and Nursery School, Northfield Junior School, Penny Acres Primary School, St. Andrew's C of E Methodist Primary School, Stonelow Junior School, Unstone St. Mary's Nursery and Infant School, Unstone Junior School, Wigley Primary School, William Levick Primary School

Some of the policy will need to be adapted for your school.

Purpose

At Stonelow School want our pupils to:

- Be resilient, reflective and to take responsibility for what they do.
- Be motivated and enjoy learning
- Develop a range of skills to equip them for a successful adult life, such as independence and ambition
- Be confident, happy and feel safe
- Be friendly, respectful, caring and polite
- Develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

In a school that:

- Fosters individual talents and abilities in every child
- Has the highest expectations for itself, its staff and students
- Celebrates success and achievement in all its forms
- Values the role parents and carers play
- Is continually striving to improve
- Actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Ownership

This attendance policy has been produced with contributions from students, staff, Derbyshire Education Welfare Service, School Health, Local GPs, PODS and the Department for Education.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.
- Establish a culture and climate, which will:
 - Enable all students to feel we are a safe and a happy place to learn.

- Endeavour for 100% attendance and punctuality by all students.
- Actively promote excellent attendance and discourage unjustified absence.
- Recognise and celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality
- Prepare students for the demands and disciplines of adult working life.

Introduction

We expect the highest level of attendance and punctuality from all our students. Evidence clearly shows that students who attend school regularly (96%+) make significantly better progress both academically and socially than those who do not. It is vital students attend school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Excellent attendance is important if students are to participate in and enjoy school community events like sporting fixtures, drama, music productions and charity fundraising events. Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence; since September 1st 2013 in line with Government legislation, the Headteacher will not grant leave of absence for any student during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers are requested not to arrange family holidays during term time.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Students often find it difficult to catch up on learning that they have missed and absence can lead them to fall behind their peers. This can affect how a student feels about school and can make their attendance even worse. Statistics suggest that a student whose attendance is below 90% will drop at least one grade across all their subjects.

Regular patterns of attendance are vital for young people to maintain friendships and peer networks. Students with regular absence can quickly feel isolated from their peers and this again affects how they might feel about attending school.

Policy

School will work in partnership with parents/carers and students to maximise every student's attendance. In addition to preventative strategies to promote attendance, flexible educational support programmes will be devised to support students with persistent absence. School will use the full range of voluntary and statutory procedures available to it in an escalated approach. Safeguarding children procedures will always override any escalated response.

In order to achieve the aims of this policy, the school will have attendance procedures in 9 areas that are reviewed annually:

1. Legislation and guidance
2. Types of Absence
3. Holidays in term time
4. Expectations of key stakeholders
5. Promoting and celebrating exceptional attendance
6. Interventions and Legal Sanctions
7. Support available for students and families

Linked Policies and guidance

Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

Behaviour and Discipline Policy and Procedures

Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy

Complaints Policy and Procedures

Equality Act 2010

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Accountability

School procedures will be constantly monitored by the Headteachers and Family Support Worker and reported as requested by governors.

This attendance policy and its procedures will be reviewed every 2 years as part of the policy review schedule.

Procedures

1. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department of 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child has regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

The Government considers a student to be persistently absent when they have missed 10% of their time in school at any time during that academic year, for whatever reason (those students with 90% attendance and below). This level of absence will be having a negative impact on learning and progress and will reduce the likelihood of them achieving their potential.

If a student reaches persistent absence level and parents/carers have not provided acceptable reasons for the absence, the school will take steps to resolve the matter. This may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent/carer is guilty of an offence".

- Prosecution under section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, may result in a fine of up to £1000.
- Prosecution under section 444(1a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, may result in a fine or imprisonment.

The definition of a parent/carer is any adult who has day to day care of a child/young person.

By law a student must currently remain in education until the last Friday in June in the school year in which he/she reaches the age of 16.

2. Types of Absence

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. In the case of every pupil whose name is entered in and not deleted from the admission register it will mark whether a student is;

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

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. The classification decision is taken by the school and **not** by parents/carers. The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1)

Registration periods

The 'AM' mark is recorded when students arrive in the morning. This period starts at 9am and registers are therefore open 9:00am-9:15am. The 'PM' mark is recorded at the start of period 4 (13:15pm) with registers being open 13:15pm – 13:30pm. If a student arrives late, after the close of the register, without good reason they will receive a 'U' mark. This will be classed as an unauthorised absence from school. Students who arrive before the close of the register will receive an 'L'

Unplanned absence;

The student's parent/carer must notify school on the first day of an unplanned absence by (9:15am) or as soon as practically possible.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the school considers a student's absence to be high or following an unusual pattern, then parents/carers may be asked to provide additional medical evidence to help explain any illness absence.

Additional medical evidence may include a doctor's appointment card/text or a photocopy of a pharmacy prescription. The purpose of parents/carers providing additional medical evidence is to help school make fair and objective decisions over which absences are genuine and which are non-genuine illness.

School will not pay any charges incurred by the writing of a doctor's note. If the school has previously written to parents/carers requesting additional medical evidence and none is provided, then the absence will be classified as unauthorised.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence;

- School staff will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school office, in liaison with the relevant member of school staff will then establish contact with the parent and/or relevant external agencies, in order to check on the safety of the Child in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

If school believes it has good reason to classify an absence as unauthorised despite having contact from a parent/carer, then the parent/carer will be informed. Likewise, if a student absence is changed from authorised to unauthorised, the parent/carer will be informed.

Examples of **unauthorised absence** which can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy (missing lessons - whether staying on or going off the site) before or during the school day
- Because it's a child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Students who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time which have not been agreed

If a student arrives late to or leaves early from school for the purposes of a medical appointment, we ask that where possible a copy of the appointment card/letter be provided so this absence can be authorised.

Persistent absences is absence of 10% or more. An individual is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised)

School Outings/Visits/Residential trips

Students who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, will be recorded as on approved educational activity.

Opportunities for children to attend these are provided; if they don't go, the children are expected in school, where alternative arrangements will be made for them.

3. Holidays in Term Time

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

School is not liable for any cancellation or alteration charges incurred by a family as a result of school not authorising a holiday during term time.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form at least one month before the date of absence and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996. See Derbyshire Penalty Notice Holiday guidance and related documents.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may entice sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Expectations of Key Stakeholders

Students:

- Arrive in school between 8:40 and 8:55, when the whistle is blown to enter school.
- Be "On time, all the time".
- If late enter school through the main entrance

Parents/carers:

- Ensure their child attends daily, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn – “smart students, ready to learn and “on time, all the time”.
- If late in the morning, sign in at the school office.
- If need to leave early sign out at the school office.
- Tell a member of staff if there are problems attending school for any reason, e.g. being bullied, feeling unhappy, problems at home.
- Telephone and speak to the school office on the first day of absence ideally before 8.30am. If a student continues to be absent school will contact daily until they return to school.
- Where possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours or not in term time.
- Bring a copy of any medical appointment cards/texts to school if requiring time off from school.
- Do not book any holidays or take children out of school during term time.
- Notify school as soon as problems arise with your child’s attendance.
- Encourage children to report any issues that are concerning them, including bullying, immediately to school staff.

School Staff:

- Be a good role model for students.
- Be responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, promptly and accurately, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.
- Give attendance and punctuality the highest profile, sharing attendance figures with students.
- Praise students for arriving on time.
- Inform Headteachers or FSW when students are absent without explanation (possibly truanting the session) or are frequently late.
- Share any concerns about the attendance, punctuality or welfare of students promptly with SLT and parents/carers.

School Business Officer/FSW:

- Keep accurate records of responses from parents/carers when their child is absent. Amend the electronic register accordingly.
- Make contact with parent/carer if no contact has been received in the morning of the first day of a child’s absence (by text or telephone call).
- Authorise or unauthorise a student’s absence according to the school’s attendance and punctuality policy and procedures.
- Monitor students for absence and lateness.
- Report concerns about behaviour, attendance or punctuality promptly to parents/carers and other school colleagues.
- Monitor students with poor attendance and action the appropriate intervention and support strategy.
- Issue attendance awareness and warning letters to parents/carers where appropriate.
- Contact Social Services immediately on the first day of absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Refer to the Children and Families Support Worker when appropriate.
- Work with other external agencies, e.g. School Health, CAMHS to support students with their health, wellbeing and attendance.
- Liaise with other schools regarding siblings/family members of students with attendance concerns.
- Carry out home visits (unannounced and announced).

Headteachers

- Discuss attendance weekly with FSW
- Strategically lead and develop the school roles outlined previously.

- Work on strategic action plans and school policy that bring about improvements in student attendance
- Lead on School Attendance Panels and ensure targets and future intervention is administered.
- Monitor and evaluate the systems in school designed to support students in their academic progress and their health and well-being.
- Monitor and evaluate school systems and interventions designed to promote exceptional attendance and behaviour.
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Implementation of the policy at the school
- Monitoring school level absence data and report it to governors
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Governing board:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil the expectations and statutory duties.
- Review and challenge attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- To support staff in school in high level intervention strategies, namely School Attendance Panel.

4. Promoting Attendance

- School reports to home - Year-to-date individual student attendance figures will be published on all academic reports that go out to parents/carers and students.

5. Interventions and Legal Sanctions

We strive for all students to achieve exceptional attendance and punctuality during their time at school. To ensure that all students have the best opportunity to attend daily, learn, grow and achieve we follow an early identification and intervention strategy to alert parents/carers and students to any concerns with attendance or punctuality.

Parent/Carer communication of cause for concern

The school follows the Derbyshire systematic process of support for students whose attendance falls below expected levels (96%). We will consider intervention with parents/carers if a student's attendance is less than 96% terms 1-6. The process includes:

1. **Autumn 1 - Step 1 letter sent (DCC Parental Responsibility Letter)**
2. **Autumn 2** - Attendance will be monitored in the second half term. **Step 1** letter will be sent out to any new any new pupils who fall below 90%.
3. **Spring 1 - Parental meetings and Step 2 letter given and DCC flow chart followed-** school invite families in for a meeting

4. **Spring 2** - Attendance will be monitored in the second half term. Contact will be made depending on circumstance to the families who have received step 1 letter and / or step 2 letter and no improvement in attendance has been made.
5. **Summer 1 - School attendance panel** – Attendance is consistently below 90%. Students and their parents/carers invited to a meeting to discuss attendance and agree strategies in order to improve attendance.
6. **Summer 2 - Penalty notice warning letters (DCC Penalty Notice Letter)** – For those parents with persistent absence [90% or less] and who have not engaged with school and made efforts to improve attendance, a warning of the school's intention to request a fixed penalty notice is issued for poor attendance. Overall attendance for the year will be shared with parents on the school report. Contact will be made with parents whose pupils overall absence is 96% or less to offer support for the next academic year in order to improve attendance.

Contact with Social Services – If a student with a Child Protection Plan is absent from school for any reason, the named social worker should be contacted immediately.

School Attendance Panels – Pupils and their parents/carers will be invited to a panel if attendance continues to be a concern. The panel may involve school staff, School Health, A Representation from PoDS, Attendance Officer and a school Governor to explore reasons for nonattendance, to identify additional support that school and others can offer. An attendance target which will be monitored over a fixed period of time will be set, failure to meet this target could lead to a fixed penalty notice. The Attendance Panel will formally make it clear any legal sanctions, which could result from student non-attendance at school.

PODS Attendance Panels – Meetings held jointly with siblings' schools if attendance is a concern across the whole family. Parents/carers and students will be invited in to meet with representatives from the schools concerned to discuss attendance and put in place strategies/support to help improve attendance.

Penalty Notices

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Prosecution - The local authority may prosecute parents/carers whose children do not attend school regularly. This could result in a substantial fine, a community order or, in extreme cases, a prison sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop your child missing school, it may also impose a Parenting Order.

Parenting Order - A Parenting Order is a court order which requires parents/carers to attend parenting education or support classes. Parents/Carers will also have to do whatever the court says is necessary to improve their child's behaviour and attendance at school.

Support Available for Students and Families

A range of support is available in and outside of school to support students and their families to achieve excellent attendance.

They include:

- FSW support
- One to one Support – multi-sensory room for teaching assistants to work with students on emotional and behavioural difficulties including providing a “quiet space” for when students are coming to terms with bereavement or family breakdown
- Nurture
- Rainbows – bereavement support
- Adjusted curriculum – some students may be offered an adjusted timetable featuring lessons in behaviour learning support to help them integrate into lessons after a long period of absence or exclusion
- FSW – intervenes and supports students who have difficulties attending on a regular basis
- School Health – referral to the school nurse or referral to the school paediatrician (school doctor) will help students and parents/carers who will work alongside family GPs
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) – referral to CAMHS has to be through school health or the family's own GP
- Out of school tuition – when supported by CAMHS, or a hospital consultant, Derbyshire Home Tuition Service will provide an entitlement to education at home or at an off-school site location. Home tuition is only available for a limited period of time and a transition plan will be drawn up with the view to returning the child to school.

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Appendix 1

REGISTRATION CODES Working Together to Improve Attendance

Present

Code / \ : Present in school / = am \ = pm

204. 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 present for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

205. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.

Absent

Authorised Absence from School

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(ii), 6(1)(b), 6(2), 7(1) and 7(2) 206. Authorised absence means that one of a specific set of circumstances applies, as set out below:

Code C: Leave of absence granted by the school

207. Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. Wherever referred to in this guidance a leave of absence should not be, and from certain types of school⁶ must not be, granted unless it has been applied for in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the headteacher believes the circumstances to be exceptional. Schools must consider each application for a leave of absence individually taking into account 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 headteacher's discretion.

Specific leaves of absence may also be granted where:

A pupil is participating in a performance

209. A school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance, within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 if the local authority have given the pupil a licence for that performance.

210. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. There are some exemptions, including the granting of Body of Persons Approval (BOPA). BOPAs can be issued by the local authority where a performance is to take place, or by the Secretary of State (generally only if there are to be many children involved and a number of different locations, but legislation does not limit this to those situations).

211. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Where the 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. However, where the terms of the licence or BOPA do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to grant leave of absence.

A pupil is subject to a temporary part-time timetable

212. 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. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

213. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

A pupil is pregnant

Code H: leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school

215. Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable. 216. An application for leave of absence should (and from certain schools must) not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. 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 headteacher's discretion.

Code E Excluded but no alternative provision made

217. If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are suspended from school or excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register. 218. When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive day of any suspension or exclusion. Where alternative provision is made schools should record this using the appropriate code for attending an approved educational activity.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

219. Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools must record absences as authorised where pupils cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

220. In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. Schools should not routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily as it places additional pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointments system particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Only where the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.

221. Pupils with long term illness or other health needs may need additional support to continue education, such as alternative provision arranged by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is registered at a school and whatever type of school they attend. The education must be full-time or as close to full-time as the child's health allows. [DfE's statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#) sets out that local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Local authorities should have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

222. 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. 223. If a pupil is present at registration

but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.

Code R: Religious observance

224. Schools must record absence as authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body (not the parents).

225. As a general rule, we would interpret 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' as 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 mark 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.

226. 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 as authorised on this basis; the rest of the request would be a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C. 227. 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; Schools taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days; and*
- *Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.*

Code S: Study leave

228. Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. 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. 229. As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence.

Code T: Traveller absence

230. 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. 231. This code should not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be used when the pupil's parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups. 232. Pupils from these groups whose parent(s) do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to attend school as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other pupils in terms of the requirements to attend school regularly once registered at a school. 233. Where a pupil has no fixed abode because their parent(s) is engaged in a business or trade that requires them to travel, there is an expectation that the pupil attends at least 200 sessions per year. The pupil must attend school as regularly as the business permits and therefore, if the business or trade permits the pupil to attend for more than 200 sessions per year, they should do so. 234. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes, it is expected that the pupil should attend school elsewhere when their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(ii) and 6(3)

235. *Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.*

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school

236. *Where the school has not granted a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away longer than the period of leave granted. 237. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not (and from certain types of school cannot) be granted.*

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

238. *Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. 239. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has been established the school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant code. 240. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 working days after the session. Code N should not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established after 5 working days, schools should amend the pupil's record to Code O.*

Code O: Absent without authorisation.

Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

242. *Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence. 243. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place.*

Attending an approved educational activity

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(a)(iii), 6(1)(c), and 6(4) 244.

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is attending another school at which they are registered or taking part in off-site activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or unregistered alternative provision. 245. Pupils can only be recorded as attending an off-site activity if it is approved by the school, of an educational nature and supervised by someone authorised by the school. Ultimately, school are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils taking part in an off-site educational activity so it would be reasonable to expect that the school would only authorise someone who was answerable to the school to supervise an activity. 246. The activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded and for pupils of compulsory school age the school must record the nature of the activity.

Attending another school at which the pupil is registered

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(a)(iii) and 6(4)(b)

Code D: Dual registered at another school

247. The law allows for a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the school 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. 248. 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 unexpected and unexplained absence are promptly followed up.

Attending an educational activity that takes place outside the school

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(iii), 6(1)(c) and 6(4)(a)

Code B: Off-site educational Activity

249. Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

250. For pupils of compulsory school age, schools must also record the nature of the activity, examples are:

- attending taster days at other schools;
- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision arranged or agreed by the school.

251. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 252. 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 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 should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. 253. This code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity i.e., when a pupil is at home doing some schoolwork.

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

254. Attending an interview 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 school. 255. This must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

256. Taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school. If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. However, the final decision on approving the activity rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account. 257. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 258. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. 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 should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

259. Attendance at an organised visit or trip, 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. 260. The educational visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 261. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the organiser of the visit or trip notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code W: Work experience

262. Work experience is for pupils in the final 2 years of compulsory school age. 263. The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 264. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. 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 should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Relevant regulation: 6(1)(iv), 6(1)(d), 6(5), 6(7) and 6(2)(b)(i)

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

265. Where a pupil is unable to attend school because: • the school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or • the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance; or • a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. 266. Schools must also record the nature of the circumstances in which a pupil is unable to attend school.

Walking distance

267. 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 safe route.

Pupil in custody

268 Code Y is also used where the pupil is in custody; detained under a court order for a period of less than 4 months or is returning to the school at the end of their custodial period

Administrative codes

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school

269. Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time. 270. For example, where parents have chosen for their 4 year-old child to attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age.

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

271. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. 272. Schools must enter a pupil's name on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. 273. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place offered, the local authority can inform schools on

behalf of the parents and notify the school when the parent has agreed that the pupil will attend school. This can also be the case where the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications for school places. 274. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must establish the reason and record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

275. 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 school as a polling station.

276. Partial school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:

- 'staggered starts' or 'induction days' where different term dates have been agreed for different year groups - this code is used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend; and
- Use of part of the school as a polling station.