

# Birkdale High School



Birkdale  
High School

Aspire - Thrive - Succeed

## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

November 2021-2022

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR BIRKDALE  
HIGH SCHOOL

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS November 2021  
POLICY TO BE REVIEWED November 2022

<b>HEAD TEACHER</b>	<b>Mr G Bourgade</b>
<b>NOMINATED ATTENDANCE GOVERNOR</b>	
<b>CHAIR OF GOVERNORS</b>	<b>Mr P Blott</b>

**KEY ATTENDANCE STAFF IN SCHOOLS:**

Family Engagement Officer	Mrs C Murphy
Attendance Admin Officer	Mrs B Peacock

**This Attendance & Punctuality Policy is part of a broader suite of Safeguarding Policies, including the School's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.**

## **CONTENTS**

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. PRINCIPLES OF THE <Name of school> ATTENDANCE POLICY**
- 3. NATIONAL CONTEXT**
- 4. DAILY PROCEDURES**
- 5. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**
- 6. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**
- 7. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION.**
- 8. DEALING WITH PUPILS WHO GO MISSING AND LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES WITHOUT PERMISSION**
- 9. RELUCTANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL**
- 10. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**
- 11. PERSISTENT ABSENCE**
- 12. FIRST DAY RESPONSE CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER**
- 13. LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PANEL**
- 14. PUNCTUALITY**
- 15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- 16. REQUEST TO ELECTIVELY HOME EDUCATE A CHILD**
- 17. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**
- 18. REWARDS AND INCENTIVES**

**APPENDIX ONE Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year**

**APPENDIX TWO Absence and Attendance Codes including sub-attendance codes COVID- 19**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Birkdale High School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore, having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our Policy applies to all children registered at this school and this Policy is made available on our school website to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school.

This Policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from Sefton Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school are committed to working closely with parents, other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

**\*Definition of parent: Section 576 of the Education Act 1996-** A parent in relation to any child or young person, includes any person:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

This also includes all parents who are absent. Parental partners can be included (whether or not they are married or the natural parent of the child as they have 'care' of the child. If a pupil lives with a grandparent or older sibling as their main carer, they can also be included as they are the main care provider.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student, that parent is still responsible for ensuring their child attends school every day.

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF THE BIRKDALE HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Governing Body of Birkdale High School places a high priority on achieving standards and feel that excellent pupil attendance and punctuality are essential. They undertake this role by

- Monitoring whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.
- Nominate a named Governor for Attendance.

In order for children to achieve their potential, pupils must be highly motivated to learn and keen and eager to attend school. Regular punctual attendance will establish good habits which will support them throughout their lives. To achieve this, the Governors and staff are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure that the school achieves a MINIMUM of 96% attendance throughout the school.

The Government expects us to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to a suitable education, to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

### 3. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The 1996 Education Act, (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a **legal responsibility** to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by '**regular**' attendance at school or 'otherwise'. The 2008 Education and Skills Act, (section 155) specifies the same requirement regarding regular attendance at alternative provision.

**The duty on parents is to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'**. Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise', children may be educated by their parents at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – F.E. colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience. The law allows parents to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

For most students the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

### 4. DAILY PROCEDURES

The school is **legally** required to register students twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8.50am and 9.10am and in the afternoon at 13.10pm and it is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

The school gates close at 8.47am and all pupils/students should be in their form/classroom by 8.50am, in preparation for the register being taken at 8.50am. At this time, they will engage in a programme of form activities ranging from assemblies, discussing behaviour and attendance as well as making sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill  
Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the website, which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

### 5. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents commit an **offence** if the child does not attend school regularly. ***If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone.*** If no message is received, we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. The school requires **two** emergency contact numbers. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. This can be done by contacting the school office or by notifying the school of any changes via the Arbor Portal App. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter, confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school.

**Once contact (verbal and/or written) has been made with the parent the school will determine if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.**

The school will only **authorise** a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school has the right to request medical evidence if a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell. This may include: a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, slip with date, pupils name and surgery

stamp, signed by GP Receptionist, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence. The Headteacher may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not.

The school **may** authorise absence under certain specific circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Headteacher in advance to secure authorisation. This **may** include work related interviews and meetings with external agencies. The Headteacher **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

**When considering if a student should be kept off school due to illness parents/carers are encouraged to read the Public Health England publication 'Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other childcare settings' (September 2014) as it provides useful guidance on whether an illness necessitates students taking time off school.**

## **6. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Such circumstances may include:

- A student leaving the school premises without permission
- A student not attending school to go shopping.
- A student not attending school as it is their birthday or the birthday of a family member.
- A student not attending school as the family have gone to the airport to meet a visiting relative.
- A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.
- A student not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday.
- A student not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings.
- A student attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons.

Our school will request penalty charge notices to address unauthorised absence. A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term **and/or** eighteen (18) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

The Local Authority will:

- Issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued.
- In the same letter, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- Issue a penalty charge notice through the post at the end of the 15-day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

## **7. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION.**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future, (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2021) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016).

## Notifying the Local Authority

Our school notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The school (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any pupil/student who is to be deleted from the admission register.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered 'missing'.

**Where a child leaves our school without a destination or another school is not identified, our school follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-\(cme\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-education-(cme).aspx). The school will liaise with Carole Blundell the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator who can be contacted on 0151 934 3181 or [CME@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:CME@sefton.gov.uk) and [carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:carole.blundell@sefton.gov.uk)**

## 8. DEALING WITH PUPILS WHO GO MISSING AND LEAVE THE SCHOOL PREMISES WITHOUT PERMISSION

If a student leaves school without permission the school will contact home as soon as they are made aware of the absence. The school will advise parents to make contact with their son and upon doing so take two courses of action: Inform their son to return to school and to notify the school that they have made contact. Parents will be advised that should they be unable to make contact that they need to contact the police to advise that their son is missing from school. Where the school feels that a missing student has additional vulnerabilities the school may contact the police as their first course of action to advise that a student has left the school premises.

Upon the students return a discussion will be had with either the student and/or the student and their parent/carer to ascertain why they left the school site. If additional support and intervention is required as a result of the discussion, then this will be implemented. A sanction appropriate to the level of need and circumstances will be applied.

## 9. RELUCTANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the students Head of Year in the first instance. The Head of Year may then direct you to another staff member within the school if they deem it appropriate.

Year Group	Head of Year
Year 7	Mr M Carter
Year 8	Mr B Boyce
Year 9	Miss S Nightingale
Year 10	Mrs R Sinclair
Year 11	Mr S Bennett

In all instances where students express a reluctance to come to school the level of additional support and intervention required will be assessed.

## 10. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Under the DFE 'Advice on School Attendance', parents\* can **no longer** expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday for up to 10 school days per year. The Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'.

The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. **From this perspective, leave of absence in term time is no longer a parental right and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.** Under DFE guidelines the school will notify the Local Authority if a parent/s takes leave of absence **without** the Headteacher's permission. In these cases, the **G code** will be used on the register to show this absence is **unauthorised**.

Under these circumstances, the school will apply to the **Local Authority** for a **Penalty Charge Notice Fine (£60-£120)** to be issued by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Charge Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Charge Notice is not paid within 28 days, parents can be prosecuted under section 444, the Education Act 1996.

Children attending Sefton schools, including (name of school), are not allowed absence for holidays. Any absence, other than for illness or emergency medical attention, will be coded as Unauthorised, (G) – Family holiday not agreed or (O) Unauthorised absence.

Parents may choose to complete an **'Exceptional Circumstances Form'** stating why they are removing their child during term time. This is given to the Head teacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be authorised.

If an 'exceptional circumstance form' is rejected, then the absence; should the parent still proceed with the removal of their child during term time; is dealt with under the **Sefton Council Code of Conduct for issuing a Penalty Charge Notice.**

**It is important for parents / carers to note that the school will not authorise ANY leave of absence unless the school feels the circumstances are unavoidable and exceptional.**

The school reserves the right to either contact the parents/carers directly or make an immediate referral to social care or the police if the school feels a student is potentially at risk while being taken out of school during term time.

The school will seek advice from the Local Authority if a student fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the student or their family. **This applies to leave of absence that are both authorised and unauthorised by the school.** As a result, the school will invoke CME procedures. The school may remove the student from roll under such circumstances, in consultation with the Local Authority. However, we will have a conversation with the Local Authority for advice on these matters.

## 11. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 90% over the school year. **Students with attendance below 90% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category.**

According to the DFE guidance 'If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority'. In addition, 'Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

When a student's attendance falls below 90% (at any stage of the year) the Family and Engagement Officer will track their attendance on a weekly basis. Mrs C Murphy will contact parents to discuss the attendance concerns and formalise an **Attendance Action Plan** to secure an improvement in attendance. The school may also consider implementing a **Parenting Contract** if the student continues to be absent from school without authorisation.

This will contain improvement targets with set timescales and an overview of the support provided by the school to support the child and his/her family.

At our school we work in partnership with the Local Authority to raise attendance. If your child's attendance does not improve despite what support the school has put into place, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Attendance Panel.

Parental failure to comply with any plan or contract may be used as evidence if the Local Authority decides to prosecute parents.

## **12. FIRST DAY RESPONSE CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER**

Our school works in partnership with Sefton Council in delivering a first day response system for children with a social worker. If children who have an allocated social worker are absent from school, we will contact the family to establish the reason why the child is absent from school.

We will complete the first day response form and submit it to Sefton Council, so information is shared in relation to why the child is absent from school. We will also request a home visit if we feel this is appropriate. We will also inform the child's social worker.

## **13. LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PANEL**

### **What is the purpose of the School Attendance Panel Meeting?**

The purpose of the School Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with Representatives from the Local Authority to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

### **What will happen at the School Attendance Panel Meeting?**

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered:

- A supportive action plan in the form of a parenting contract will be agreed.
- An attendance target date for improvement will be set.
- The student's attendance will then be closely monitored for a period of 12 school weeks.

If the parent fails to attend without reasonable justification this could result in a Penalty Charge Notice being issued to parents/carers or court proceedings under the 'Single Justice' process. Under section 444, a **Penalty Charge Notice will be issued for £60 to parents**. This will be issued to both parents even if one of the parents does not live with the student. Each parent will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. **There is no right of appeal by parents against the penalty charge notice**. Failure to pay the Penalty Charge Notice Fine will result in further legal action being taken by the courts, with the maximum fine currently £2,500, a community order or three months in prison.

### **What happens next?**

Whilst the intention of the School Attendance Panel meeting is that the attendance will improve, if the attendance deteriorates by the target review date the Local Authority may recommend legal action is taken. This could include prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, Education Supervision Orders or Parenting Orders.

**Issuing Penalty Charge Notices:** Each parent receives a penalty charge notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay the penalty charge notices in Sefton may result in prosecution.

**Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

**Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an **Education Supervision Order** (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a **Parenting Order**. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and Local Authority can be cited.

## 14. PUNCTUALITY

As you may be aware, the law treats some persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents may be prosecuted by the Local Authority if late arrival is not resolved.

### Poor punctuality can lead to your child:

- Feeling embarrassed in front of their friends.
- Missing the beginning of vital lessons.
- Missing important instructions for the rest of the school day.
- Learning bad habits which could affect their employability in the future.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equal days' worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

### Late Procedures

Children, who arrive late and have gone to the office entrance, must sign in and a reason for the lateness provided.

The admin staff will:

- update ARBOR with their mark.
- Monitor children who frequently arrive late parents will be contacted and a referral to the Local Authority will be considered.

Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M providing the appropriate documentation has been received by the school

Any child arriving after 9:30am (or whatever time) for any reason other than medical will be marked **U** (late after registers closed).

Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. Where a parent/carer or appropriate adult is not present to sign out their son, appropriate notification must have been received by the school to enable the school to let the student leave. Pupils signing out for any reason is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours.

## 15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO:

- Provide **two** emergency contact numbers to the school.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence.
- Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible but, in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that she can complete most of her timetable before leaving.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school ensuring they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your timetable can help you to do this.
- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please contact the Head teacher and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
- Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact school before the concerns escalate.

### IMPROVING ATTENDANCE – WHAT SCHOOL DOES:

- Marks the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
- Carry out robust first-day calling procedures including priority routine for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- Informs any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Carry out robust first-day calling procedures including priority routine for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
- Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that **only** the school can authorise absence.
- Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Encourage parents to accept support through an Early Help Assessment where it is deemed appropriate.
- Monitor pupils who are supported by the In Year Fair Access Panel and those who attend alternative provision including Complimentary Education
- Work with external agencies to maintain good attendance contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
- Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance record each term at Parents' Evening and via pupil reports.
- Works with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern, i.e. – Social Care, Early Help Services, Police, YOT, SEND.

- Make referrals to the Local Authority School Attendance Panel where pupils' attendance levels are becoming a cause for concern.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.
- Works in partnership with the Local Authority to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism sometimes utilising legal interventions.
- Campaign as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting levels of attendance

## **16. REQUEST TO ELECTIVELY HOME EDUCATE A CHILD**

Our school works with the Local Authority to ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education (EHE). We follow up-to-date guidance that is published. If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or is open to a social worker we work closely with the Complementary Education Service, SEND and Childrens' Social Care.

If a parent requests to Electively Home Educate their son we will send out the DfE guidance regarding Home Education to parents.

If, after discussion with the school and upon receipt of the DfE guidance parents still wish to Home Educate their son(s), the school will request written confirmation from the parent.

Once in receipt of the written confirmation the school will forward the request to the Local Authority and will wait for confirmation from the Local Authority that it is okay to remove the student(s) from our roll. Upon removing a student from our roll to be Home Educated the school will complete the relevant documentation and send it to the Local Authority.

## **17. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

Students who have good attendance will have an email and/or letter sent home. Attendance data is reviewed every half term in relation to rewarding students. Those students with 100% attendance for the half term are rewarded with the email and/or letter. Similarly, those students on 98% - 99.9% attendance also get a commendation email and/or letter.

## **APPENDIX ONE: Addendum:** recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year

The Government have amended regulations to enable schools, in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, to continue to record where a pupil does not attend in circumstances relating to COVID-19.

### **Attendance expectations**

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.

## **APPENDIX TWO: National Absence and Attendance Codes including sub-attendance codes COVID-19**

The national codes enable our school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. 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.

**Unauthorised Absence from School:-** Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

**Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.**

If a school does not authorise 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 for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

**Administrative Codes:** - The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

**Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities, then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

#### **Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

#### **Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

**In March 2021 the government defined and published a set of sub codes relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19) We have defined a set of sub codes for schools to use to consistently record non-attendance related to COVID-19 and help them to complete the educational settings status form.**

#### **Recording non-attendance related to coronavirus (COVID-19) Set of sub-codes**

The set of sub codes to record non-attendance related to COVID-19 are:

##### **Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

##### **Code X02: Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms**

This code is used for pupils who are self-isolating because they have symptoms of COVID-19 but they have not yet had a positive test.

##### **Code X03: Not applicable for this academic year**

##### **Code X04: Not applicable for this academic year**

##### **Code X05: Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)**

This code is used for pupils who are required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) red list rules.

##### **Code X06: Pupil who is clinically extremely vulnerable if shielding is advised**

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. However, this code is used if shielding is advised nationally or in a local area by DHSC, Public Health England (PHE) or UK Health Security Agency. In this scenario, pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. DHSC / PHE Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.

##### **Code X07: Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in government advice**

This code is for pupils who as part of local or national restrictions to education settings are specifically advised not to attend school for public health reasons related to COVID-19.

**Code X08: Pupil not attending school in line with advice from Directors of Public Health as part of outbreak management**

This code is for pupils who are advised not attend school, for public health reasons, as part of formal contingency planning (sometimes called outbreak management) advice related to COVID-19. This code can only be used to record restricted attendance where this has been advised by the relevant public health authority.

**Code X09: Pupil or student required to self-isolate as a close contact of a confirmed case**

This code is for pupils or students who are advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are not fully vaccinated and are over the age of 18 years and 6 months.

There is no requirement for children or young people under the age of 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccine status, to self-isolate whilst awaiting the results of their PCR test where they have been a close contact.

**Code I01: Illness**

This code is used for pupils who are absent because of non-COVID-19 related illness or sickness.

**Code I02: Illness confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)**

This code is used for pupils who are absent because they have tested positive for COVID-19.

Management information software suppliers are implementing these changes at their earliest convenience.

Where schools are using these sub-codes, they will still need to consider on an individual basis whether Code X is the appropriate code for a given non-attendance. They will need to ensure that Code X is only used where a pupil does not attend school because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from either Public Health England (PHE), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) 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

Where a pupil's non-attendance does not meet these requirements, it should not be recorded as Code X and schools should consider whether another code can be used.