

Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust and Madeley Academy



Attendance Policy

Prepared by: Sir Kevin Satchwell

Date: July 2024

Review Date: July 2025

This policy summarises the expectations required from all Schools/Academies within Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust (TTMAT) and Thomas Telford School (TTS). Further details are contained in the DfE Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance published 29 February applicable from 19 August 2024. The Guidance should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Extract from Statutory Guidance applicable from 19 August 2024

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Law and day to day processes

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

There is a strong link between persistent absence and crime.

The law requires that all schools must have an admission register.

Appropriate national attendance and absence codes must be used.

Schools/Academies should only grant leave of absence under exceptional circumstances.

Lateness should not exceed 30 minutes.

Where possible Schools /Academies should hold more than one emergency contact number.

Statutory returns to the LA and DfE must be complied with.

All schools must have an electronic management information system which can be accessed by the DfE.

Contact details for school staff relating to Attendance:

Mr Duncan Marshall – Senior Deputy Head

dmarshall@madeleyacademy.com

Mrs Abigail Biffin – School Attendance and Welfare Officer (EWO)

abiffin@madeleyacademy.com

Miss Grace Docker - School Attendance Officer (day to day attendance and absences)

gdocker@madeleyacademy.com

Roles and Responsibilities

TTMAT, TTS and Local Governing Boards

All trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to:

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Monitor attendance patterns

The Attendance Lead (designated senior leader responsible for attendance)

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- 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 students and families.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Duncan Marshall and he can be contacted via telephone 01952 527700 or email: dmarshall@madeleyacademy.com

Attendance and Welfare Officer

The school Attendance and Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Positively engage with local agencies
- Liaising with parents through home visits
- Referrals for Penalty Notices

The Attendance and Welfare Officer is Mrs Abigail Biffin and she can be contacted via telephone 01952 527700 or email: abiffin@madeleyacademy.com

The Attendance Officer

- The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with the Attendance and Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Attendance Lead (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Officer is Miss Grace Docker and she can be contacted via telephone 01952 527715 or email: gdocker@madeleyacademy.com

Class Teachers and Tutors

Class Teachers and Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information by completing registers using Bromcom.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend every timetabled session on time.

Day to day processes for managing attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Students must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.45am.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence EACH DAY of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the Attendance Officer.

The Attendance Officer can be contacted by via telephone 01952 527715 or email: gdocker@madeleyacademy.com

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or if parents/carers have previously been issued with a SAL 2 letter from our School Attendance and Welfare Officer

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. 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 student'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 student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

Any requests for leave of absence should be made by contacting the Attendance Officer or completing the necessary Leave of Absence form (attach form).

Lateness and Punctuality

A student 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.

Students who arrive to lessons after the morning register has closed (after 8.45am) will need to sign in using the electronic sign in system located in the Attendance Office.

Following up unexplained absences

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the student's parent/carer via text message on the morning of the unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, a home visit may be made by our Attendance and Welfare Officer
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained;
- Message the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the Attendance and Welfare Officer

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Advice from Telford and Wrekin Council is that "exceptional circumstances" include where:

- It is unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life
- It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event
- The event cannot be organised outside of the school term
- The event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child
- Taking part in the event will be of greater educational value to the child than attending school
- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the Attendance Officer. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision.

Legal Sanctions

From September 2024, the procedure for fining has been updated:

Penalty Notices & Need to Improve

- A PN can be issued when 10 sessions of absence have been recorded in a 10 week rolling period. (This can cross over terms)
- This type of PN will replace Holiday Penalty Notices (HPNs) so will include absence for leave in term time
- The cost of the PN will be increased from £60 to £80 if it is paid within 21 days – only the first PN issued in a 3 year rolling period can be paid at £80.
- A 2nd PN in a 3 year rolling period will be charged at a flat rate of £160.
- No 3rd PN will be issued – alternative legal intervention will be sought.
- A new ‘Notice to Improve’ (NTI) has been created. Once agreed and issued, if the pupil has any further absence between 3 and 6 weeks, a PN is issued. The NTI allows between three and six weeks to see improvement in attendance. If there is no immediate improvement, then a PN can be issued without waiting for the monitoring period to end.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and we understand the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. We recognise that achieving good attendance is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school’s ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance, we aim to:

- a. Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school’s vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- b. Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium);

- c. Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. The responsibilities of the Attendance Lead will include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents;
- d. Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need;
- e. Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced to enable pastoral staff to work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with the Attendance Lead and Education Welfare Officer;
- f. Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels. In doing so, we will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It will also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance;
- g. Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This will include displays, assemblies and the opportunity for students to receive rewards for good attendance. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this will also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year/form group and individual level;
- h. Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies;
- i. Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Attendance Monitoring

Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to students and families;
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level;
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Governing Body.

Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families;
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year and Form Tutors to facilitate discussions with students and families;
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

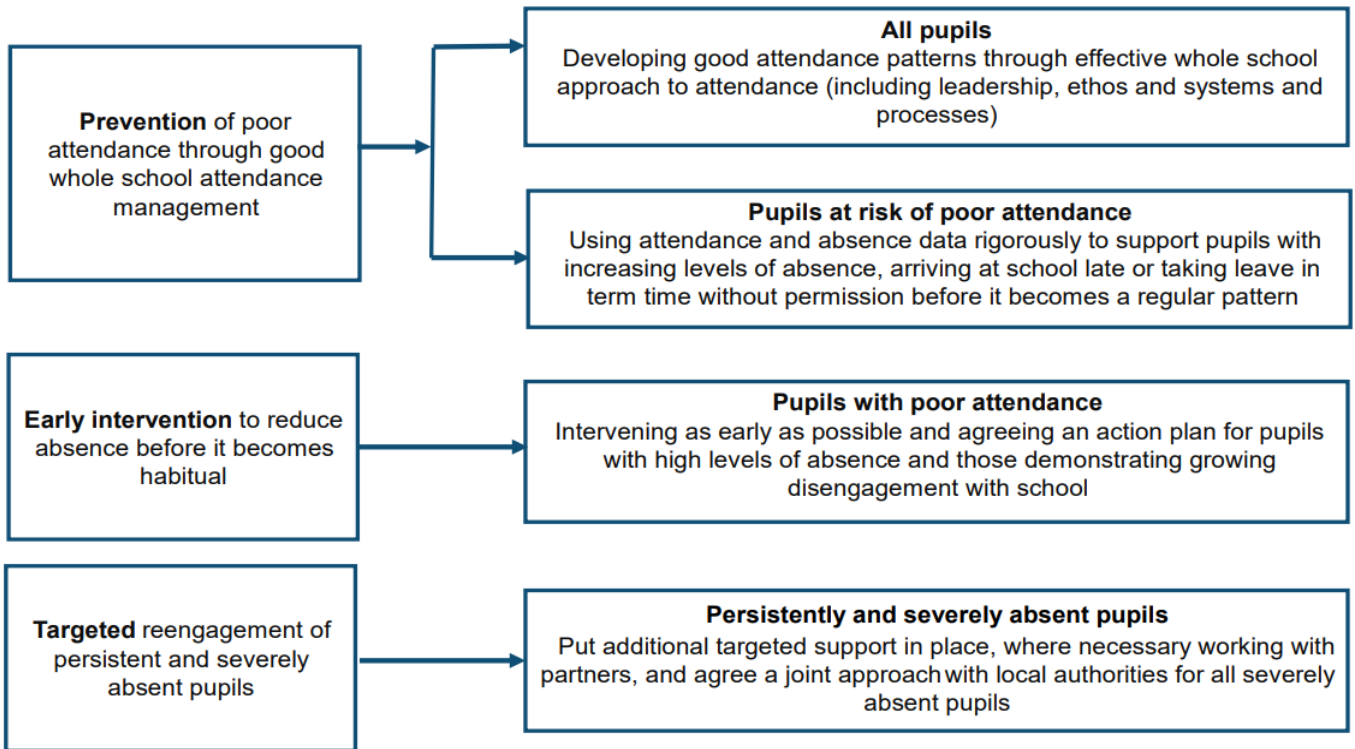
Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

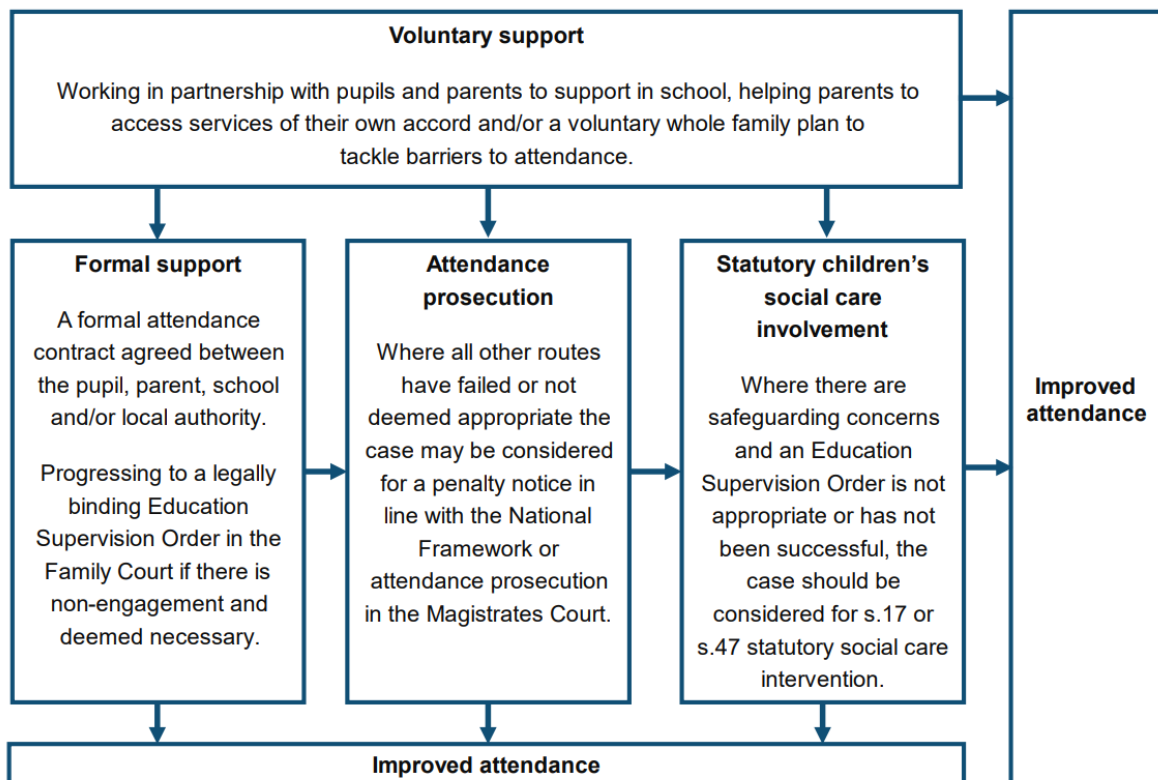
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school;
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Extract from Statutory Guidance

Effective school attendance improvement and management



Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Further details in relation to contracts, Education Supervision Orders (ESO), prosecutions, parenting orders and penalty notices are contained in Statutory Guidance paras 134 to 200.

Headteachers, Safeguarding leads and Senior Attendance officers appointed by Academies should familiarise themselves with legal intervention strategies and ensure that appropriate data is shared regularly with Governors.

Admissions Register

The school admission register must be kept in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The admission register must be kept electronically.

Deletion of names

Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- full name
- address
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there

Off-rolling without following the appropriate procedure, which includes informing the LA must not happen.

All Schools/Academies must follow the updated use of registration codes as follows.

Extract from DfE Statutory Guidance

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session 286. Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed 288. 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 not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is marked N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to mark them as absent using code U.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority 290. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority.

A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. 291. Schools must also record the nature of the provision, examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school.

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.

Code W: Attending work experience. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.

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

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. It is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence.

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

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

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

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

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. This requires a start and finish date of any agreement and should be short term.

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes.

Code R: Religious observance. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). The school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment). The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made. The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds 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 school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made for the session in question and the pupil is attending it, schools should record this using the appropriate attendance code, or if the pupil is attending another school at which they are a registered pupil, schools should record this using code D (dual registered at another school).

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

New for September 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question.

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established 393. Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

If a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to **Code O**. 395. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed.

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.

Code #: Planned whole school closure.

Other relevant legislation and guidance

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002

The Children Act 1989 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013

The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963

The Equality Act 2010

Relevant government guidance

Children missing education

Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

Elective home education

Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Preventing and tackling bullying Providing remote education.

