

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.



Attendance Policy

Policy Approved by:	Full Governing Board
Date of Approval:	September 2026
Date of next Review:	September 2027

St Catherine Catholic Primary and Nursery School Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school promotes pupils' well-being and gives them the best chance of learning and reaching their potential. Pupils should attend school every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. In line with the latest statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), St Catherine views excellent attendance as a core component of safeguarding; we recognise that regular school attendance is a protective factor and that unexplained or persistent absence can be an early indicator of wider safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Good attendance is important because pupils:

- get on better with learning and other children;
- cope better with school routines, work and friendships;
- find learning easier because they do not miss out;
- are more successful moving between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training; • are known to be safe and well by us.

Research shows a direct link between high attendance and doing well at school.

All children have the right to an education. We encourage and expect 100% attendance for all pupils.

We will:

- tell pupils and parents the importance of being at school;
- check that pupils are at school every day;
- follow up and check the absence of persistent non-attenders;
- aim for an attendance rate of at least 97%. Pupils who are under school age, in Nursery or Reception, are treated in the same way as all other children.

Parents:

- by law, must ensure that their child attends school;
- should arrange dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school holidays, whenever possible;
- make sure that their child arrives on time at 8:30am. If they arrive after the allocated time, sign-in at the school office;

- should contact the school on the first day their child is away from school and each subsequent day thereafter.

Pupils should arrive and be collected from school on time:

- registration is at 8:30am Pupils go straight to their classroom when they enter the school.
- late arrival can cause children to feel anxious or upset;
- if a child is collected late, after 3.15pm. There may be a charge for this childcare;
- we take the view there are no late children, only late parents;
- we contact parents of pupils who have patterns of lateness to talk about how to arrive and/or be collected on time.

Absence during term-time

Parents should:

- call the school on the first morning of all absences before 9.15am on 01895 442839 telling us the reason for being away;
- send in a note - by hand or email – telling us the reason for being away when they return to school;
- keep in touch by telephone, letter or email, if a child is away from school for a longer period (daily);
- tell us about any planned absences in advance. Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance. Complete the 'Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances' form, which is available from the school office and on the school website .

Every half-day absence must be labelled by the school as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. If the school have not been informed as to the reasons for your child's absence then this will be automatically recorded as unauthorised.

Authorised absence

An absence is authorised when parents tell us an allowable reason for being away from school. Allowable reasons include:

- being too unwell to come to school; ○ emergency medical or dental appointments;
- religious events, one per year; ○ visits to another school, tests or exams; ○ any other 'exceptional circumstances' (see page 6).

Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school for reasons that are not allowed. By law, unauthorised absences are an offence and can be liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine. Unauthorised reasons include:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily,
- absences that have not been properly explained,
- travel during term-time, including family holidays, that have not been agreed,
- repeated or persistent non-specific illness, for example, 'poorly/unwell',
- absence of other siblings if one child is ill,
- absence because a parent is ill,
- oversleeping,
- inadequate clothing/uniform,
- confusion over school term and holiday dates,
- medical and/or dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason,
- child's and/or family birthdays,
- any routine family event or trip, for example, shopping.
- where the reason for absence is given as illness and occurs either side of a school holiday, medical proof will be sought. Without this proof the absence will not be authorised.

There will be a new National threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered according to the new National Framework for Penalty Notices (see attached).

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least [two weeks](#) in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes. Families must provide the school with information regarding the area travelling to for occupational purposes. School will provide families with work to support parents with keeping children in-line with peer learning and minimise gaps.

Attendance codes

The current list we are using is from Hillingdon Council w.e.f. 2025/2026 Academic Year. A list of the codes is included at appendix B

The law

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children are properly educated. When your child is registered at a school, parents, carers or guardians must ensure the regular and full-time attendance of their child. The Local Authority has the power to issue Fixed-Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absences. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent and for each child. In accordance with the new National Framework for Penalty Notices the penalty charge will be £160 payable within 28 days, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. If absence is repeated a straight fine of £160 per parent per child will be issued. For a third offence within a 3 year rolling period the Local Authority will consider other enforcement options available to them.

For term-time pupil absences, the Education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed all references to 'family holidays' and 'extended leave' as well as the 'notional threshold of 10 school days' authorised absence.

The 2013 amendments made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The regulations also state that head teachers should determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if leave is given for 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances

This information seeks to help clarify the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances' and outline some guiding principles to aid the head teacher's decision-making process while giving parents a consistent and fair approach to requests for any term-time absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'.

Guiding principles

1. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including

weekends and school holidays. The head teacher will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy is that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

2. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.
3. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event, for example:
 1.
 - a. holidays or other travel, including as a result of parental work commitments, are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances';
 - b. leave which is taken because of the availability of cheaper fares or other costs are not regarded as exceptional circumstances;
 - c. claims of illness as a reason for a delayed return, particularly after normal school holidays will not be considered unless accompanied by travel tickets dated before the school opens or other agreed dates. Medical documentation from abroad will not normally be accepted unless accompanied by travel documents indicating travel dates prior to school reopening.
 2. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave. Absence will only be authorised if the head teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
 3. Absences to attend parents' own wedding may be exceptional if the head teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the head teacher may use his discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.
 4. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
 5. The needs of the families of service personnel will be taken into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.

6. Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities will be made and may result in a leave being granted as an exceptional circumstance.
7. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis, including where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

When making absence-related decisions, the head teacher will consider:

- a. a pupil's record of attendance for the current and previous academic years;
- b. time of absence being taken in the school year. If the request is made to extend the beginning or end of a school holiday period, it is unlikely to be considered exceptional.

The head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorised.

The following factors may also help the head teacher to reach a decision: •
number of school days being missed;

- any exceptional term-time leave requested and/or taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose;
- whether alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent to limit the time away from school;
- impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family, for example, family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN;
- the potential impact that the absence will have on the child;
- whether the absence falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

How to tell us about exceptional circumstances:

- A parent should complete an application form for term-time at the earliest opportunity. The parent with whom the pupil normally resides must make the application.
- Leave may only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given.
- Tickets and/or other travel arrangements should not be booked prior to discussion with and agreement of the school.
- Parents should not confuse telling the school with having permission.
 - Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are an offence and can be

liable to legal action or a fixed penalty fine. • Extended absences may put your child's school place at risk.

- In the event of an emergency when you have to take leave urgently, taking children, then you should inform the school or have the school informed immediately. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively and evidence other than your word may be asked for.

Action for low attendance

Not coming to school is a serious concern. However, each case is different and the school knows that there is no standard response. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to use.

- In every case, early intervention is needed to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- Prior to the engagement of Hillingdon Attendance Team, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It may also set up a parent meeting to discuss the pupil's absence and agree a 'parenting contract' which will include an agreed plan to improve absence moving forward. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement of the Hillingdon Attendance Team.

Attendance levels

Attendance levels show our expectations and what happens next:

- 96%+, expected attendance. This will help all aspects of a child's achievement and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Research from the Department of Education shows that children with this higher level of attendance are more likely to achieve expected levels.
- < 96%, below expected attendance. As attendance falls, our concern increases. We follow our stepped approach to take action.
- 90% or lower, persistent absence. Absence is causing serious concern. It is highly likely to affect attainment and progress and is disruptive to the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Hillingdon Attendance Team. A Fixed Penalty Notice will be considered where absence is not authorised.

- 50% or lower, severely absent. This may necessitate the involvement of the Attendance Team at Hillingdon.

For all children, we have a stepped approach to taking action. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed.

- staff will use discretion and consider each case carefully;
- where there has been no contact from parents, we will initiate first day calling for all pupils; parents will be contacted after registers have been taken at 8:30am in the instance that a child is absent from school with no contact from parents. If there remains to be no contact, the school attendance officer will attempt contact again before 10:00 am. At 12:00pm, if there is no information regarding the reasons for a child's absence the Headteacher and/or SLT will be informed and a decision made on the next course of action which may include but is limited to home visits, contacting known wider family or referral to the Attendance team at Hillingdon.
- for pupils with attendance below 90% there will be a discussion with the Hillingdon Attendance Team at our regular attendance review meetings;
- we will monitor trends in pupil attendance and punctuality, including our vulnerable groups;
- we will request for parent/carer to meet school staff;
- if appropriate, will initiate procedures to access support from other agencies.

The Hillingdon Attendance Team actions may include:

- home visits,
- multi agency meetings,
- sign posting to supportive agencies, • issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, • court action for poor attendance.

Leavers and Children Missing in Education

The school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils from harm. This includes knowing and taking reasonable steps to check the destinations of leavers. If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6, parents should:

- give the school full information about their plans including
 - date of move, ◦ name of new school, ◦ new home address,
 - the start date at the new school if known,
 - and reasons for moving (a form is available at the school office),

- confirm the school has your current mobile phone number,
- let us know when you move.

When pupils leave and parents have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact the parent, then a child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations to try to track and locate the child. Telling us leaving details saves unnecessary investigations.

Rewards for positive attendance

The main benefit of regular attendance is continuity and progression in learning. We promote positive attendance through:

- Weekly award (Attendance Cup) issued for the class with the highest attendance, also published in our newsletter. The class with the best attendance over a half term is rewarded with an own clothes day.

Monitoring

Summary attendance information is reported to Governors at least termly by the Head teacher.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St Catherine Catholic school and Nursery has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

The school will:

- Look at weekly attendance figures given from attendance officer in **Safeguarding Meeting attended by Attendance Officer and SLT.**
- Phone parents of children who are absent and have an attendance below **96%**. (Look at the spreadsheet detailing reasons for absence before phoning).
- Discuss the reason the child is absent with the parent when appropriate.

- Share attendance data (and potential impact on attainment/progress) with Parents at termly Parent's Evenings.
- Encourage parents to send pupil back to school as soon as they can. Pupils may be able to attend in the afternoon session e.g. if 48 hours after vomiting finished at 12 pm then child will be able to attend the afternoon session.
- Log any concerns regarding attendance on CPOMS.

The attendance Officer will

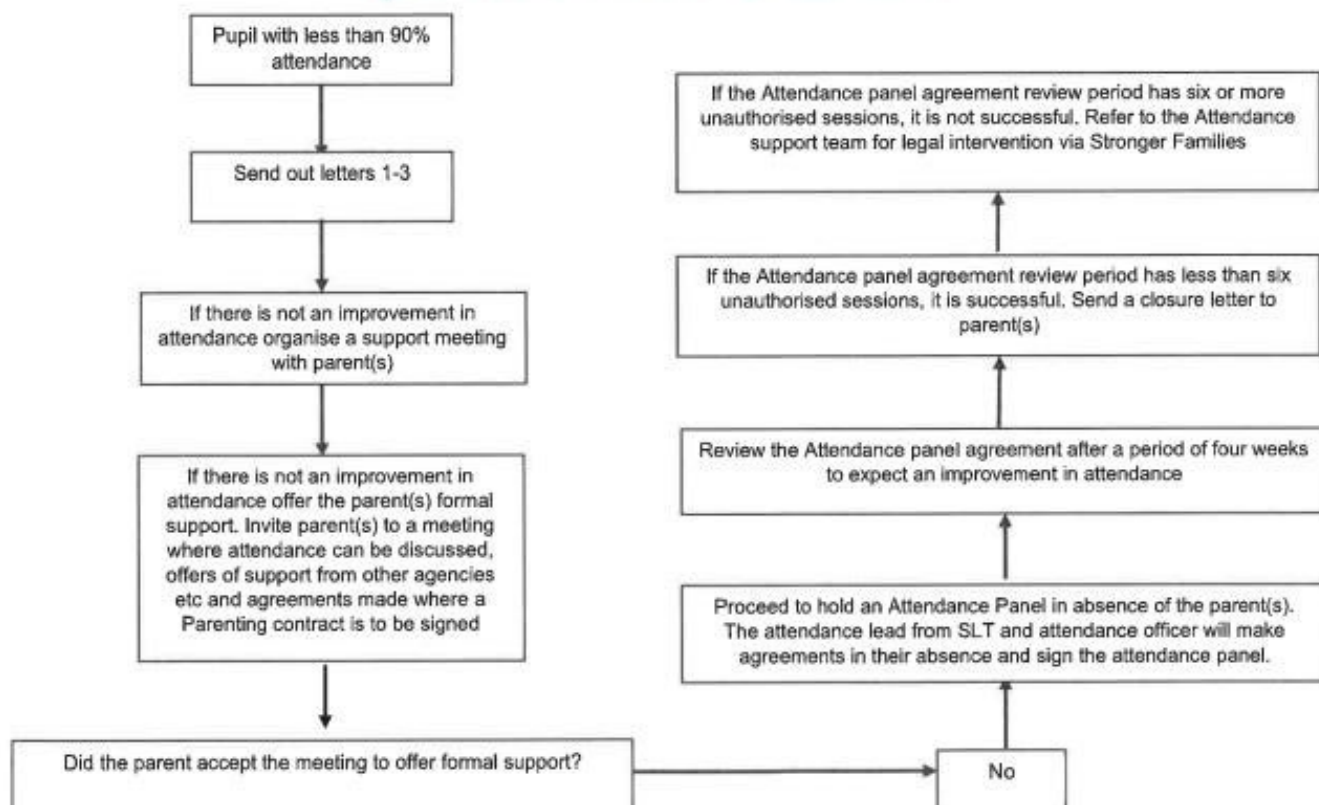
- Alert class teacher and SLT if any punctuality/ attendance trends are noticed.
 - Alert headteacher if a child's absence is unauthorised.
 - Make a note on SIMs of any absent children, record parental contact e.g phone call or email. This records the date, the child's first and surname, the reason for absence and the number of days absent e.g., number 1 if this is the first day.
 - Ensure any concerning behaviour or trends in absence recorded on CPOMS and shared with all relevant teaching staff.
 - Encourage parents to send pupil back to school as soon as they can. Pupils may be able to attend in the afternoon session e.g., if 48 hours after vomiting finished at 12 pm then child will be able to attend the afternoon session.
 - Ensure contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these 'N' codes are reported to the headteacher or in their absence the SLT daily.
 - Make sure contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the 'N' code. Any 'N' codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
 - If no contact is made then a home visit may be conducted on the first day of absence following advice from the Attendance team.
-
- If a pupil's attendance falls below **96%** parents will be made aware of this.
 - If a pupil's attendance persistently falls below **93 %** a letter will be sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the parents may be asked to make an appointment to speak to the attendance officer or SLT (not head teacher). This will

include an agreement on strategies to improve attendance over an agreed period of time and means by which the school can support families.

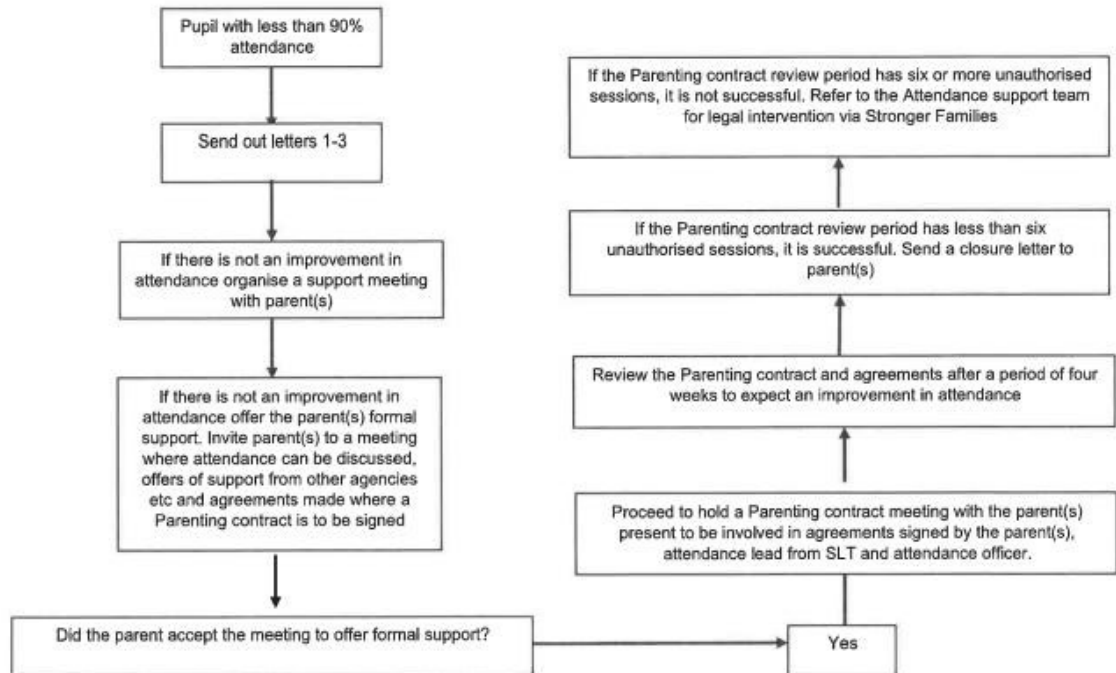
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% a letter is sent home explaining that this level of attendance is considered persistently absent, and the parents are asked to make an appointment to speak to the head teacher (see Appendix A for clarification of procedures for persistent absence).

Appendix A

Formal interventions that are to be held by the school – Attendance panel flowchart



Formal interventions that are to be held by the school – Parenting contract flowchart



Appendix B



Guidance on School Attendance Coding

2025/26

Contents of the attendance register

All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an electronic attendance register in accordance with regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

Schools must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder) is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity as defined in regulation 6(4); or
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances as defined in regulation 6(5).

Schools must record whether the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or not. There is no requirement for schools to record whether the absence of pupils not of compulsory school age is authorised or not, but where possible schools should use the national attendance and absence codes to help them monitor their attendance and to form good attendance habits.

Schools must record the nature of the activity where a pupil of compulsory school age is attending an approved educational activity.

Schools must also record the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools cannot delete a pupil's name from the attendance register unless they have a reason (as set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended) to delete the pupil's name from the admission register; the pupil's name must be deleted from both registers at the same time.

Schools can notify the local authority of deletions from their roll by using the online form [here](#).

Attendance and Absence Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Present

- **Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm.** 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.** 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. If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.

Absent (authorised)

- **Code C: Leave of absence granted by the school.** 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 school 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 considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.
A pupil is pregnant: Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence. We would expect schools to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of each case. Ultimately it is at the headteacher's discretion how much leave to grant.
- **Code C1: A pupil is participating in a regulated performance or**

undertaking regulated employment abroad: 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 regulated 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. 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 when a *Justice of the Peace* has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Another is where 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). Where a *Justice of the Peace* has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence 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. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code: C2 A pupil is subject to a temporary 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. 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. 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 full-time, 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. Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education, but only part-time at the school in question (e.g. dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision or flexi-schooling) this code must not be used and the appropriate code for why the pupil is not in school for that session should be used.

The borough must be notified [here](#) of any pupil who is placed on a part-time table.

- **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made.** 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. 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 appointment).** 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). 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. Schools should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. 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 appointment.** Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. If a pupil is present at registration but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.
- **Code R: Religious observance.** 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). 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. 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. 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.** Schools can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(5), for a pupil to study for a public examination where the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence). Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, 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. As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence.
- **Code T: 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 not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be used when the pupil's parent(s) is/are travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups. 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. Where a pupil has no fixed abode because their parent(s) is/are 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. 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. Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level

consideration may be given to attendance enforcement.

Absent (unauthorised)

- **Code G: Holiday not granted by the school.** 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. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.
- **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.** 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. 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

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.

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, schools 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.

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

- **Code D: Dual registered at another school.** 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. 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

- **Code B: Off-site educational Activity.** Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. 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.

The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. The activity must be supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Supervision means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition. Schools 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. This code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity i.e., when a pupil is at home doing some schoolwork.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority. A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision; examples are:

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

Schools should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the education provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

- **Code J1: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.** 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. This must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

- **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity.** 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. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 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.** 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. The educational visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. 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.

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- **Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.** Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and they have not done so, or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live. These circumstances are set out in law but in summary are where:
 - the local authority has a duty to arrange the pupil's home to school travel and has not; or
 - the pupil is registered at a private school that is beyond walking distance from the pupil's home and the local authority has not arranged boarding for them or enabled them to go to a state school nearer to their home; or
- **Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.** Where a pupil is unable to attend school because the transport provided by the school, or a local authority is not available, and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance. Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles.
- **Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.** A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- **Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.** The school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend.

- **Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.** Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be recorded with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays.
- **Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.** The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:
 - in police detention,
 - remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
 - detained under a sentence of detention.

If a pupil is remanded to local authority accommodation, they should attend school as normal where possible and where it is not possible any absence should be recorded using the appropriate code. Schools are expected to communicate with the pupil's Youth Offending Team worker while the pupil is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the pupil's educational needs, progress and return to the school upon their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement; therefore, it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate.
- **Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.** The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend. This means the pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:
 - contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), or
 - prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
- **Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.** An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not mean the pupil has been prevented by an unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause, examples are:
 - Bail conditions (that prevent the pupil from attending the school or being present in the area where the school is situated).
 - Court attendance (where the pupil is legally required to attend Court).

Administrative codes

- **Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school.** Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time. 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.** To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. 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. 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. 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.** 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.

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.