



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025/2026

Lead: Mrs M Atkins

Links to:

- Data Protection
- Equality Information
- SEND
- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour

Last reviewed on: January 2026

Next review due by: January 2027

Approved by: Full Governing Body

Date:13.01.2026

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- * Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- * Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- * Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- * Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- * Acting early to address patterns of absence
- * Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- * We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- * The implementation of this policy at the school
- * Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- * Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- * Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- * Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- * Communicating with the Local Authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- * Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- * Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- * Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- * Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- * Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- * Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

- * Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- * Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- * Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- * Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- * Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- * 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 Surrey Attendance Advice Officers to tackle persistent absence
- * Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- * To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- * To record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register

School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- * Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- * Transfer calls from parents/carers to the specific staff, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- * Share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance with the Headteacher and attached Surrey Attendance Advice Officer

Class Teachers:

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- * Completing registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- * Following up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the Headteacher
- * Informing the Headteacher of concerns
- * Being alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report them to the office staff or Headteacher

Parent/Carers

Parent/Carers are expected to:

- * Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- * Call the school to report their child's absence before 09:00 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- * Provide the school with a minimum of 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- * Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- * Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the school to discuss any difficulties you are having

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- * Attend school every day, on time
- * Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- * Discuss any problem preventing them from attending school, with a member of staff

4. Registers

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher - or a member of staff acting on their behalf - can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

5. Absence

Recording Absences

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- * Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- * Absences which have never been properly explained
- * Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- * Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed valid under the Education Act 1996.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- * Illness (including mental-health illness)
- * Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s).
- * Parent travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending an educational provision
- * If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes. This would include:

- * Work experience placements
- * Field trips and educational visits
- * Sporting activities
- * Link courses or approved education off site
- * Most types of dual registration

6. Reporting Absences

Absences should be reported either by phone, voicemail or on email before 09:15 on the first day of absence and thereafter on a daily basis. Failure to do so may result in the school conducting an unannounced home visit.

If the school is concerned about a child's absence we may request a doctor's appointment card after 3 days of illness. If this is not provided any further absences could be marked as unauthorised.

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school may grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance officer and/or Family Support Worker and will be advised that no further absence (including sickness and diarrhoea) will be authorised without medical evidence.

Exceptional Leave of Absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is closely linked.

Graduates earn a higher average hourly rate than young people who leave school with few or no qualifications.

School will only authorise leave of absence in term time in *exceptional circumstances*.

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made using our Leave of Absence forms (available from the school office). The Headteacher will consider the application on behalf of the Governors.

Consideration will then be given to the student's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed 10 sessions in any one academic year.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, the Surrey Attendance Advice Officers will be notified and the parent may be liable to a Penalty Notice.

7. Registration & Lateness

- * The school gates open at 08:20
- * Children are expected to be in their class by 08:35.
- * Morning registration will take place at 08:35.
- * The registers will remain open for 30 minutes and any child, who arrives within the 30 minutes, will be marked late (L).
- * Any pupil who arrives after the registers close at 09:05 the whole morning session will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U code). If a valid reason is given for the late arrival, for example, attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. (See Appendix 1)
- * The afternoon registration will be taken at 13:00.
- * In cases of persistent late arrival to school, parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher.

8. Non-Attendance

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform St. Giles' staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received from the parent:

- * the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- * the address of the new school
- * new home address (if it is known)

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date, and confirmation that the child has started at their new school, the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school within ten days of the child leaving. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by the Surrey Attendance Advice Officer.

Escalation Process - Responding To Non-Attendance

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. However if the child is absent and no reason has been provided the following procedure will apply:

- * On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 09:30, the school will endeavour to contact them as soon as possible. The absence will be marked as unauthorised until the school receives a valid reason for absence
- * If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and a home visit may be made by the Attendance Officer and the Family Support Worker. Parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached Surrey Attendance Advice Officer

- * Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Surrey Attendance Service may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution

Should a child's attendance reach 50% or below and no improvement is being made, a referral will be made to Surrey Children's Services for their involvement.

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued.

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' has not been authorised by the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of register without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

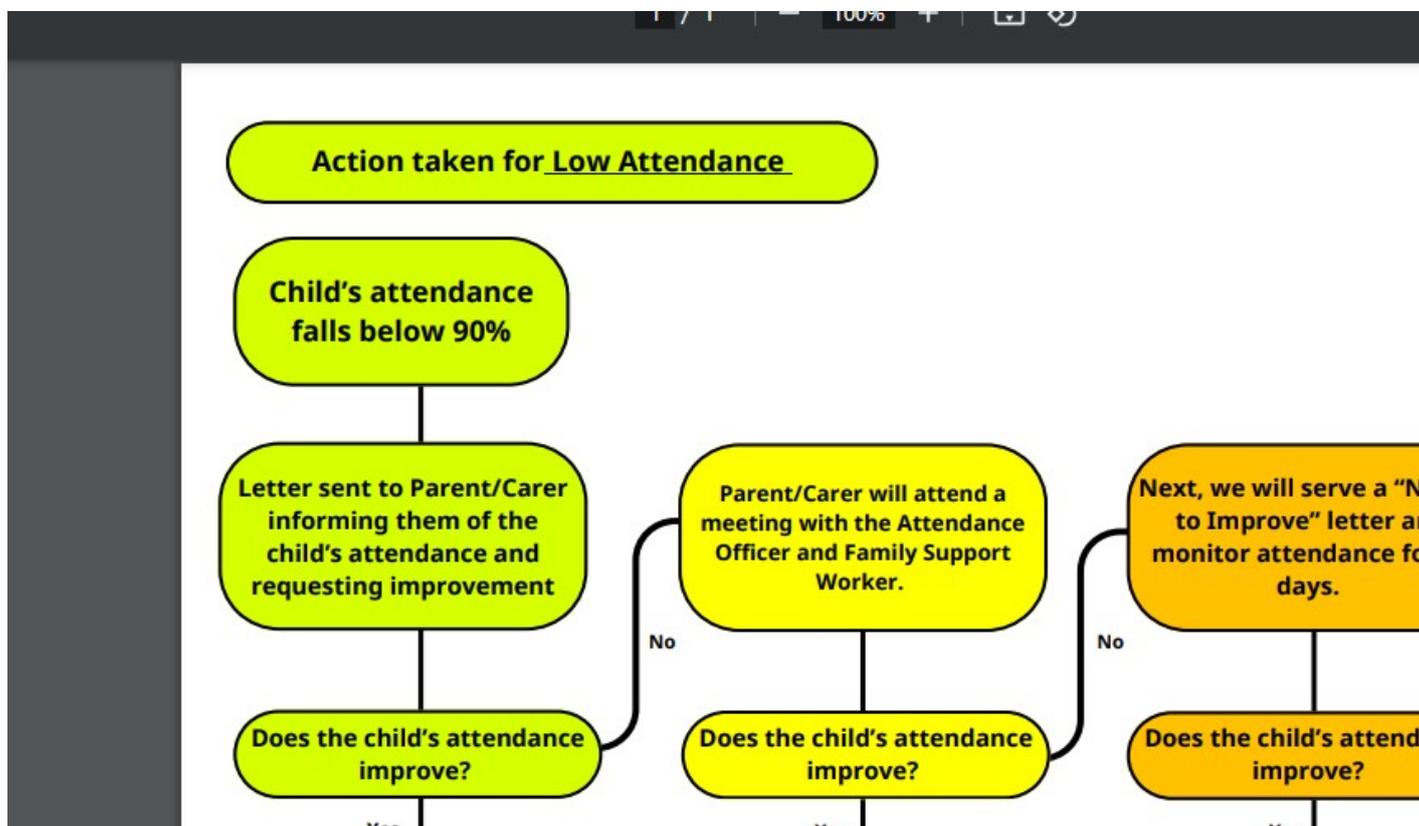
Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19th August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00 **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to **£80.00 if paid within 21 days** of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

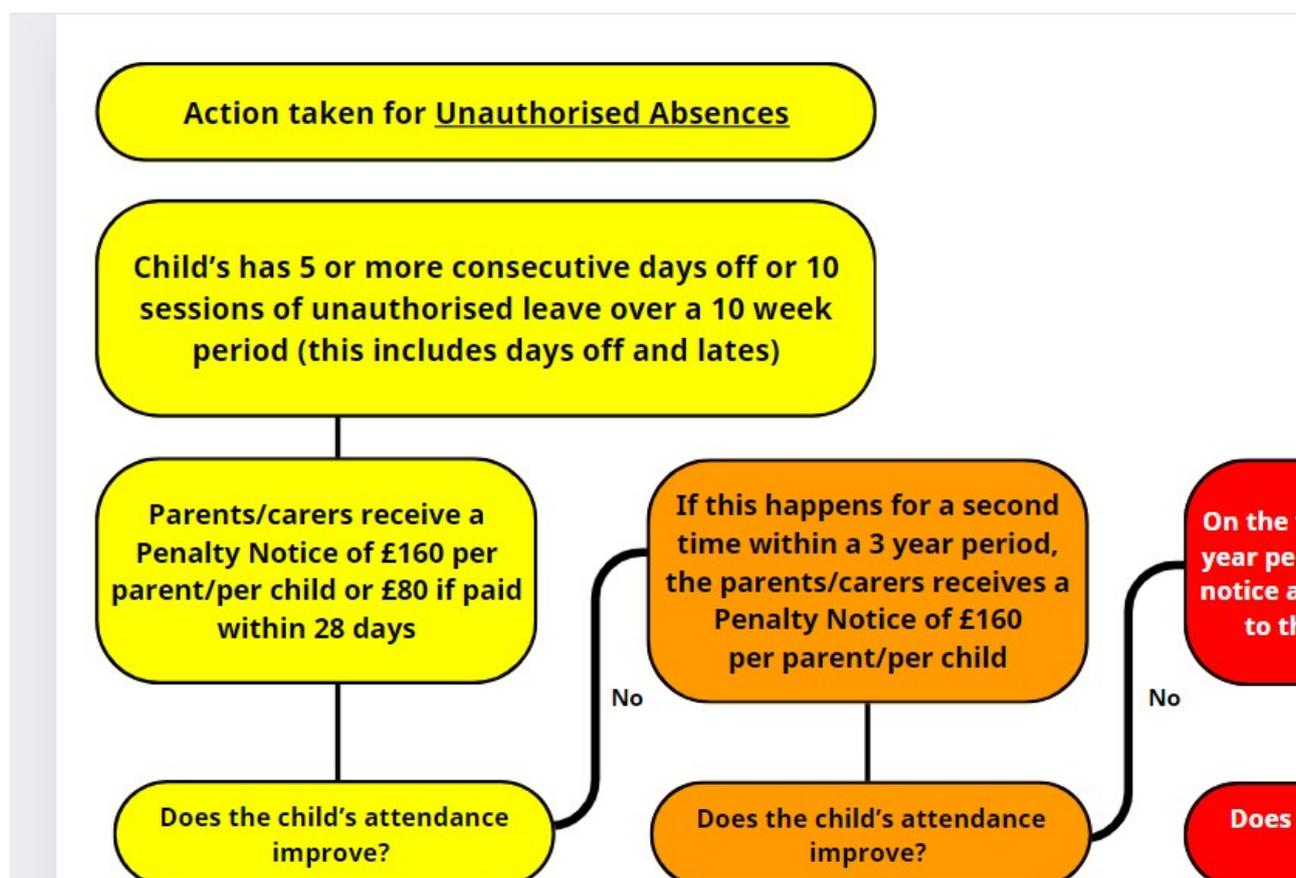
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19th August 2024, the rolling **3-year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice** and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3-year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under S444 Education Act 1996.

Low Attendance



Unauthorised Absences



The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer

The Surrey Attendance Service monitors the attendance of all children on a regular basis. The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer will work with school staff and parents to promote good attendance and investigate reasons for absence.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved by school then the school will make a referral to the Surrey Attendance Service. The Surrey Attendance Advice Officer will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Surrey Attendance Advice Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2,500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

9. Encouraging Attendance

St. Giles CofE Infant School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- * by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- * by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils

- * by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see Lateness).
- * by publishing attendance statistics
- * the names of all children who achieve 100% attendance by the end of the academic year are included in the final newsletter of the year
- * by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- * by, if necessary, arranging meetings with parents/carers
- * by referring the families to the attached Surrey Attendance Advice Officer if the irregular attendance continues

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- * Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- * Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- * Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
 - Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
 - Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by School Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- * Child protection and safeguarding policy
- * Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the Local Authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays