

Whitegate End Primary School and Nursery



Attendance Policy

Responsible Person	Headteacher
Date reviewed	December 2024
Next review	December 2026
Signed	<i>R Hollingsworth</i>

At Whitegate End, we create **emotionally resilient children** and staff with a range of academic and life skills. We prepare our children for life, not only the next stages of their education, and provide them with the tools to be **lifelong learners**.

Everyone **belongs**. The environment we create for each other is **safe** and gives us the opportunity to challenge each other's thinking and stand up for the things we feel passionate about.

We **thrive** when we go out into the ever-changing world and are proud of the **memories** that we create together

Here at Whitegate End we offer our children such a broad and rich curriculum that we do not want any child to miss a single second. We strongly encourage everyone to be here on time, every day to make the most of every opportunity on offer. By attending each day, every child will have the best possible chance to achieve and make lasting memories. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff will work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that our school has to offer.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Our aim is to provide a caring environment where any barriers to attendance can be identified and addressed with support from both the attendance lead (Mrs Bingham) and the learning mentor (Mrs Addyman). We strongly believe that any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school each day.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

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

Expectations

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day, and ensure that
- their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:00am, or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (E.G. Dental/medical appointment)
- Try to make health appointments outside of school hours, and provide proof of an appointment if the child's absence is due to an appointment with another agency (E.G Health)
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or School Office any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested
- School may mark an absence as unauthorised retrospectively if contradictory information is found and will notify parents.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance (including number of days missed) of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late
- Meet regularly with the Education Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality

- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Attendance Officer.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

K Painter is our Governor who is responsible for the monitoring of pupil attendance.

The headteacher (Mr R Hollingsworth)

The headteacher is responsible for:

- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader 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 pupils and families
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Bingham and can be contacted via info@whitegateend.oldham.sch.uk

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 8.45am each day.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance lead/learning mentor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils 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 pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm in Key Stage One/Key Stage Two and at 12.35pm in EYFS.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. This can be done via phone (0161 770 5460) or email to info@whitegateend.oldham.sch.uk.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil'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 pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. School request copies of any correspondence relating to the appointment.

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

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

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

The attendance lead and learning mentor will closely monitor any patterns linked to punctuality and lateness. Parents/carers will be contacted to discuss reasons for this and offer support/encouragement to ensure increased attendance.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call/text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit/welfare check or inform other services should this be required.
- 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 – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call 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 an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via written reports and progress meetings. This will include the % attendance and number of days missed.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

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 possible prior to the planned absence and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. 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 above for more detail)
- Parents/carers being members of the armed forces where leave cannot be chosen or changed.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Legal sanctions

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

Penalty Warnings

From the start of the autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (previously £60 if paid within 21 days).
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution,

but may include other attendance legal interventions. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

Strategies to promote attendance

Our school ethos is shared continually with parents and carers to ensure they understand the reason 'why' their children need to attend school each and every day. We understand that attendance is not only the responsibility of the individual child so we ensure we have clear procedures in place to work closely with parents/carers. We value the importance of building strong relations with our parents and if required, are prepared to have challenging conversations to improve attendance. We will do our utmost to ensure our children want to come to school each day to play their role in the curriculum we have on offer to them.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

Our school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. This will be done using FFT Aspire 360 attendance report.

Pupil-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 board.

Analysing attendance

Our school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils 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

Our school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports during weekly briefing meetings to class teachers and support staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- Data will be shared at weekly SLT meetings to discuss actions needed and impact of these.
- 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 pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Our school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide a caring environment where any barriers to attendance can be identified and addressed with support from both the attendance lead and the learning mentor. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. This support will form a bespoke action plan for the individual family and be reviewed regularly to ensure the correct support is in place and having a positive impact.
- This could be regular conversation with parents, interventions with children in the form of check ins or to address barriers to attendance.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils 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

Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support.

At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Examples of prevention, early intervention and targeted support are outlined below, although not limited to:

Prevention	Early intervention	Targeted Support	Statutory Action
Discussion with parents and pupils	Trauma-informed approaches	Attendance panels Referrals to support agencies	We will work with the local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/ or has a social worker ▪ Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school ▪ Family learning ▪ Reward systems ▪ Inclusion resources ▪ Additional learning support ▪ Behaviour support Personal, social and health ▪ Learning mentors ▪ Pupil Voice Activities ▪ Friendship groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early help referral options ▪ Reintegration support packages ▪ Anxiety-based school avoidance resources ▪ Parenting contracts ▪ Referrals to support agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time limited part-time timetables 	These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parenting contracts ▪ Education supervision orders ▪ Attendance prosecution ▪ Parenting orders ▪ Fixed penalty notices

Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family, however the decisions will be guided heavily by the graduated approach for attendance, contextual and education needs of the child and all decisions will be made in line with attendance legislation and school policies.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 12months by L Bingham/Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1 Term Time Leave of Absence- FAQs for Parents- from September 2024

This document has been updated to reflect changes from September 2024 in the law and information from the new National Framework for the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

When are penalty notices (fines) issued by the Local Authority?

Penalty notices will be issued when the threshold is met. The threshold is: 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. A session is a morning or afternoon - each school day consists of 2 sessions. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence: e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks.

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

*** NEW From September 2024 ***

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

From the start of the autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (previously £60 if paid within 21 days).
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first.

In a case where the national threshold is met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks) for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other attendance legal interventions. Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

How do I apply for term time leave of absence?

Parents must complete an official request form and submit it to school at least 6 weeks prior to the first day of absence requested. Forms are available from the school office. Evidence

must be provided if parents wish the Headteacher to consider any exceptional circumstances.

How will I be notified of the decision?

The Headteacher will respond in writing to your request.

Will children under 5 years be issued with a penalty notice if a leave of absence is taken in term time?

Children become of mandatory school age the term after their fifth birthday. Only children of mandatory school age come under the regulations. This means that some children in Early Years may not be of statutory school age and therefore no penalty notice would be issued.

Does the school or the LA make the decision to pursue the issuing of a penalty notice?

Following parents/carers taking the child/ren on an agreed/ unauthorised leave of absence which meets the criteria for the issuing of a penalty notice i.e. 10 school sessions within rolling 10 school weeks, the Headteacher must submit relevant documentation to the LA as follows:

- Certificate of absence for an agreed leave of absence for the period in question.
- Witness statement written and signed by the Headteacher.
- Copy of leave of absence application form from parent/carer including reason for request and the Headteacher's reply (if possible).

The LA will then determine whether a penalty notice should be issued.

What if I take my child out of school without completing prior a written application?

No request for leave of absence can be granted retrospectively so in such circumstances, leave would be unauthorised.

Is the Penalty Notice issued per parent per child?

A penalty notice of £80/ child is payable within the first 21 days and rises to £160 thereafter. The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer. Legislation indicates that the LA can issue penalty notices per parent per child. The authority will determine on a case-by-case basis which option is most suitable based on information received but can still exercise its legal right to issue penalties per child per parent.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid, what happens next?

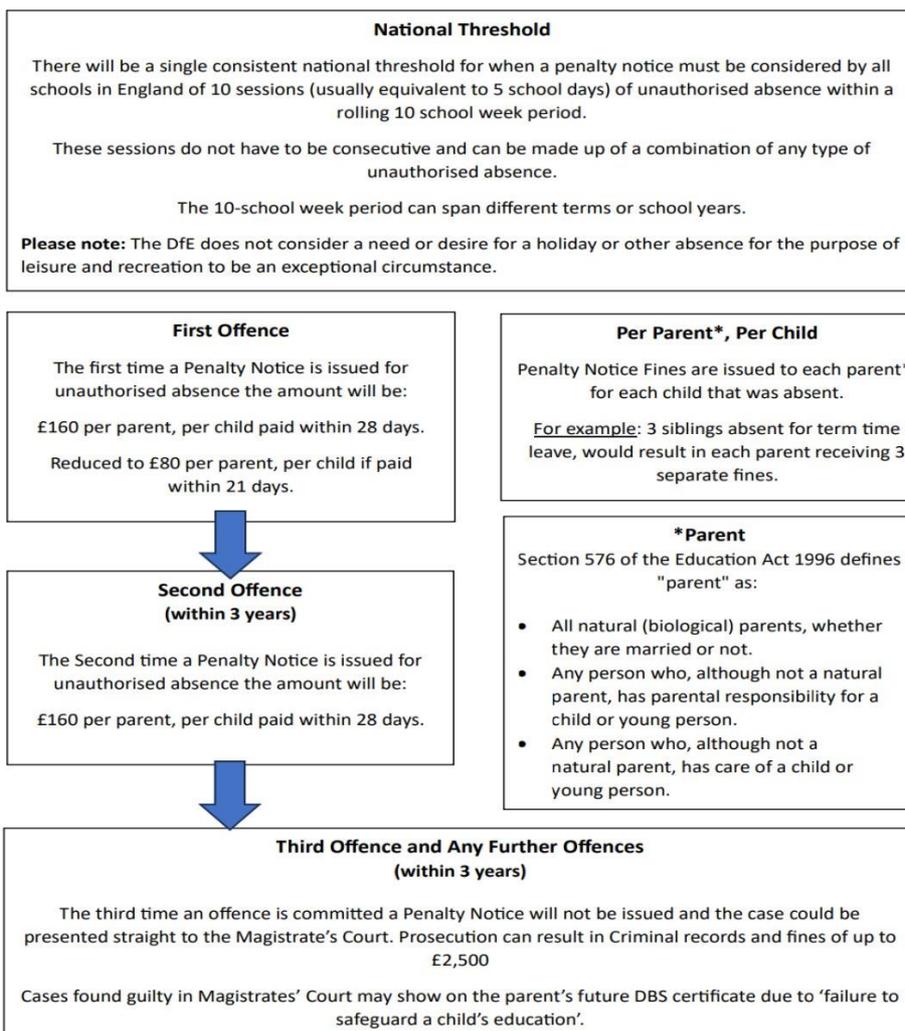
The LA would consider progressing the case to the magistrates' court under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1). An officer of the Education Social Work Service would present the

case initially but, if a not guilty plea is entered by the parent, then the initial hearing would be adjourned to prepare for a full trial.



Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance have changed from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by the DfE, the following changes have come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.



Appendix 2 : attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance some of which may apply to Secondary schools.

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