

Peacehaven Community School

Attendance & Punctuality

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Reviewed by Headteacher	Rachel Henocq Joshua Burns
Chair of Governors	Patricia Metham

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Useful contacts

Senior Leader: behaviour and attendance	Joshua Burns joshua.burns@swale.at
Attendance and inclusion officer	Marie Wootten pcs-attendance@swale.at
Report daily absence due to illness	01273 575832 pcs-attendance@swale.at

1. Principles

Peacehaven Community School encourages 100% attendance and punctuality for all students. The school expects all students to attend regularly and arrive at lessons on time, in order to take full advantage and access the full-time educational opportunities they are entitled to. Regular and punctual attendance demonstrates that the students of PCS have a strong sense of identity and value the learning community they belong to. Their attendance reflects their pride in PCS and the value they place on their learning. The rigorous and continuous drive to improve our attendance illustrates how we all recognise and understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

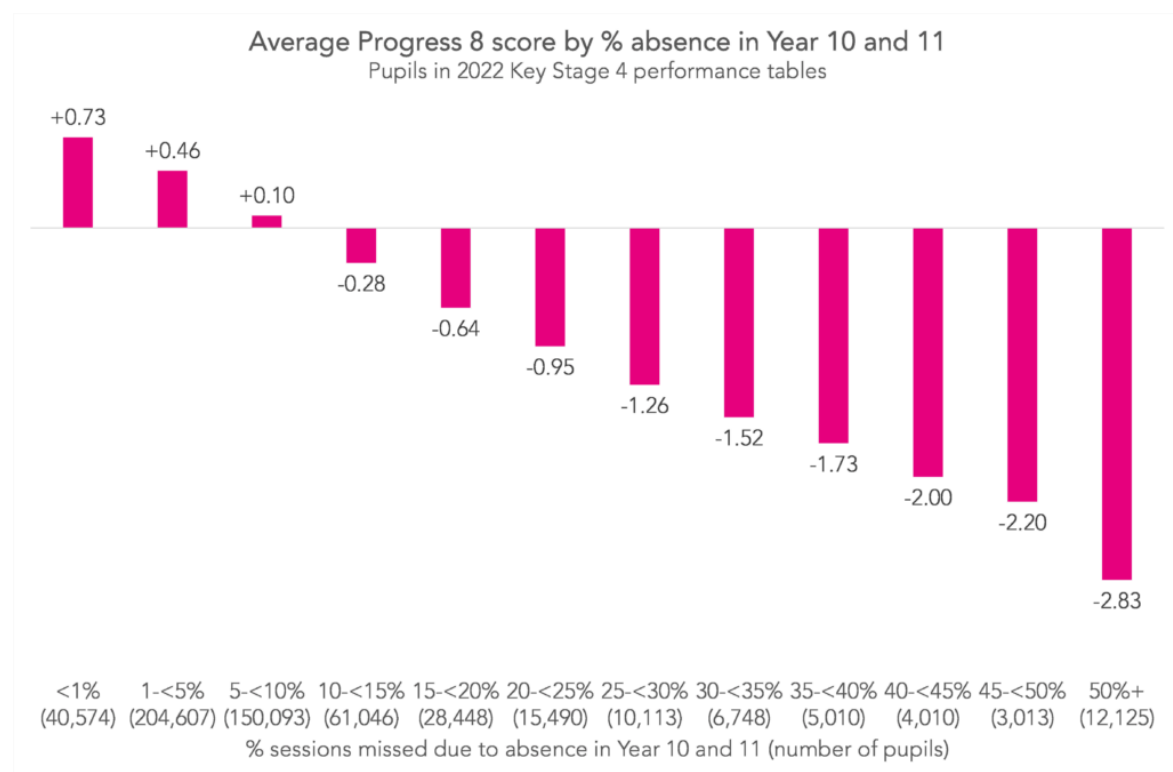
- Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.
- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents or carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better 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 may make things worse.

2. Why regular attendance is important

2.1 Learning and Achievement:

There is a clear link between high attendance and high achievement. Students with higher rates of attainment have higher attendance levels in comparison to students with lower levels of attendance. We expect all students and parents/carers to know their attendance/absence rates from school.

The current national picture emphasizes the correlation between attendance categories across KS4 and the impact they have on the average student's progress measure (P8):



In addition, further support between the correlation from attendance to achievement is shown within our internal data on Bromcom - MCAS and the Student Portal.

Evidence suggests that:

- students with an overall absence rate of 8.8% or more have a much higher chance of not achieving grades 9 to 4 in English and maths
- students with an absence rate of 5.2% achieved a grade 4
- the overall absence rate of students not achieving grades 9 to 4 was twice as high as those achieving grades 9 to 5 (8.8% absence rate in comparison to 3.7% absence rate)
- for the most vulnerable students 90% of young offenders had been persistently absent from school - attendance less than 90%

- 83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent from school.

2.2 Safeguarding

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility. Within the context of our school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for a child encompasses seven key elements.

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- SEND

Failing to attend our school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. This may result in a welfare check, Team Around the School and Setting (TASS) involvement or Police check being carried out. If persistent absence continues, this can result in a referral to the TASS or referral to external agencies (Social Services).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at Peacehaven Community School is Mr Verniol; if there are concerns about student wellbeing and safety, he can be contacted by email mat.verniol@swale.at

3. Legal framework

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This is now sectioned in 22 legislation & guidance for attendance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.

This policy has been created following the recent government guidance issued in February 2024. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance, February 2024). The law on school attendance entitles every student to attend a full-time educational provision suitable for their age, ability and SEND needs. Parents/carers have a legal obligation to make sure their child receives that education by attending school. Where parents/carers decide to register their child at school, it is the additional responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure their child attends that school every day, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

4. Rewards and incentives

Excellent and regular attendance is acknowledged by the school in assemblies and through our school rewards system (see table below). Students will receive recognition for achieving excellent attendance each term. The Pastoral team and Senior Leaders may also use extra-curricular school events and activities or trips to incentivise attendance.

0 lates in a week	A positive letter home, an email home praising the student for arriving to every lesson on time and stating how they were entered into our weekly draw for students who arrived on time to every lesson.
Weekly: 100% Attendance & 0 Lates	Named in a year group wheel and 1 winner per year receives a £5 Amazon voucher.
5 achievement points	100% attendance in a week. Students will be rewarded with 5 achievement points.
Weekly reward for being on time	Weekly rewards: students will be entered into a prize draw based on having 0 lates to all lessons.
Reward assemblies	Year group assemblies to reward students for attendance and punctuality.
Attendance badges - Bronze, Silver and Gold	Students will receive a Bronze badge for two terms of consistent full attendance, a Silver badge for four terms of consistent full attendance and a Gold badge for a full academic year of 100% attendance.
Termly: Attendance Ambassadors	Attendance ambassadors are identified as role models within each house and tutor group. These students collect student voice on supporting attendance and have a termly meeting on their year groups attendance incentive.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that students attend school regularly and are punctual. This will help to ensure that every student achieves their potential.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Joshua Burns is the SLT member with responsibility for the strategic approach to attendance in school. The Attendance team will work to develop effective systems for tracking, monitoring and improving whole-school attendance.

The Attendance team coordinates the recording of accurate attendance registers and supports intervention for students and families where attendance is a concern. Members of the team will support SLT in creating and maintaining systems to improve attendance and punctuality and will provide key attendance data. They will work to create an ethos where attendance and punctuality are valued by all stakeholders of the school.

Subject teachers and cover staff take a register within the first 5 minutes of every lesson. If the electronic register is unavailable, a paper register will be used and delivered promptly to the Attendance Office. If a student arrives to a lesson after the register has been taken, the teacher amends the register with how many minutes late the student is.

Personal Development Mentors monitor the attendance and punctuality of their students, noticing and taking action when a student's attendance is reduced or inconsistent. They are required to raise any concerns with the Attendance team and Pastoral Leader for their year group. They make supportive phone calls home on the first day of any period of absence to check in with the student and enquire if there is any information that the school ought to be made aware of.

Pastoral Leaders (PLs)

The PLs will support the Attendance team in their role. They will regularly meet with and mentor the persistent absentees as identified by the Attendance team. The PLs monitor the attendance and punctuality for the year group to which they are attached and work with the Attendance team to support students for whom attendance and punctuality are issues.

Pastoral Support Managers (PSMs)

The PSMs will support the PLs to mentor students who are persistently absent. They will support the Attendance team by following up on absences within their year group on a regular basis.

6. Attendance procedures for individual absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, not by the parents/carers, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required every day of absence, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (e.g. after registers have closed).

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) from the Local Authority. The ESBAS Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use legal interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Parents/carers must inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence, and on each subsequent day. Parents/carers should leave a message on the school absence line with a reason for their child's absence on **01273 575832** before 8:30am. They can also contact the school using My Child at School app (MCAS) or by emailing the attendance team on pcs-attendance@swale.at.

A **medical certificate** will be required if a child is/children are absent for **more than 3 days**. When requested by the school, parents/carers must provide medical evidence as proof of absence. If this is not provided, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Medical evidence is also requested where attendance has previously dropped and is therefore being tracked.

If a parent/carer has concerns over issues that might affect their child's attendance, they should contact either the Attendance team on the contact details above or the relevant member of the Pastoral team (e.g. Personal Development Mentors) so that the school can work with the family to resolve any issues prior to a referral to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service within the Local Authority.

7. Lateness to school

The school day begins at **8.40am** and ends at **3.10pm**. Morning registration takes place at **8.40am** each day and all children are expected to be in school and ready to begin their first lesson at 8.40am in order to secure a registration mark. After this time, they will be recorded as late, including if they are on the school premises but have failed to attend the start of lesson one without permission from a member of staff.

Any student who arrives after 8.40am will hand in their electronic device and this will be stored in the attendance office until 3.10pm. This allows us to monitor students' lateness and have supportive conversations around the barriers to arriving on time and reducing these in the future.

The morning registration is open for 30 minutes, closing at **9.10am** after which a student will be marked with a '**U**' code signifying unauthorised absence.

1st U-Code: the Pastoral Support Manager contacts the home to inform families that their child has received a 'U' Code; this is a supportive measure to understand the context of the absence.

2nd U-Code: a letter will be sent home informing parents/carers of the next steps, including the '10 in 10' process and the use of the fixed term penalty notice.

3rd U-Code: the Attendance officer will arrange a meeting in school as their child will now be placed on the 10 in 10 programme, which if they fail will lead to a fixed term penalty notice.

All further U-Codes: all further 'U' codes will be monitored through the '10 in 10' programme and ESBAS involvement.

Truancy calls, texts or emails are sent out each day to alert parents/carers if their child is not in school and no absence message/communication has been left. This system ensures that we know the whereabouts of the students in our care. In line with our safeguarding policy, a priority call list of students is in place for those who fall into a vulnerable group category. In the case of any of these students being absent they are contacted before the register closes and, where needed, appropriate external agencies are informed.

Any truancy of any lesson will mean students have time to make up at the end of the school day. Communication is shared with parents/carers at 12.30pm later truancy after 12.30pm is logged the following day.

8. Lateness to lesson

The number of minutes a student is late to lesson is recorded by the class teacher for each lesson of the day. A report for the accumulation of minutes late to lessons is run once a week and students and their parents/carers are notified of the total amount of time a student has been late. Students will be set a detention on Friday, from 3.10pm, with the length of time set according to the amount of lost learning time accumulated during the week.

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance will ensure data is analysed and triangulated with other members of the strategic leadership team and school, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour and teaching and learning, so that a targeted approach is used for support. Support may be from school staff or external agencies and students and families are always involved in the process.

9. Persistent/Severe absenteeism

9.1 Persistent Absenteeism (PA) definition

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance falls to 90% or below for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and cooperation is needed from parents/carers to tackle this.

A student who misses 10% of their education will miss approximately 120 lessons per year or 600 lessons over the course of their compulsory secondary education. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; parents/carers will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken. Action will likely mean working with Team Around the School and Setting to put support in place before legal action is discussed.

9.2 Severe Absenteeism (SA) definition

A student becomes a 'severely absentee' when their attendance falls to 50% or below for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's or young person's educational prospects and the fullest support and cooperation are needed from parents/carers to tackle this.

A student who misses 50% of their education will miss approximately 600 lessons per year or 3,000 lessons over the course of their compulsory secondary education. Any case that is seen to have reached the SA mark or at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority; parents/carers will be informed of this immediately and remedial action will be taken. Action will likely mean working with Team Around the School and Setting to put support in place before legal action is discussed.

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 students whom 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
- implement sanctions, where necessary

9.3 Staged Intervention Process

Wave		Who	What happens in each wave
1	97% +	All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward excellent attendance. Call home on the first day of any absence to check in with the student/family. Record late to school/lesson.
2	96.9 – 90%	Role of the Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phone call to outline mentor focus student. Attendance target card issued with targets set by tutors. Reviewed after 2 weeks
3	89 – 80%	PSM's/PL's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with parents and SLT link. Letter and phone call home, letter issued by attendance team. Meet students and identify barriers. Attendance booster card.
4	Below 80%	Attendance team / SLT Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PL/attendance team to meet parents with student in school. Student to be enrolled onto 10 in 10 plan Plan, do, review completed Follow-up letter Home visits to identify barriers to attendance and support
5	Severely Absent (<50.0%)	JBU/MWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JBU to meet with JBT and discuss alternate provision. 10 in 10 enforced. Parent meeting along with joined up approach with safeguarding. EBSA officer engagement

Everyone is responsible for attendance
'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'

Wave 1 - Rewards
A student in this wave is attending school 97% or more of the time. These students will be rewarded weekly.

Wave 2 - Tutors
A student in wave 2 is between 96.9 and 90%. This is a crucial stage where tutors must highlight the barriers to these students attending school and support them in re-gaining 97%+.

Wave 3 - PSM's/PL's
These students have 80 to 89.9% attendance. PL's will meet parents/carers alongside their SLT link to highlight barriers in and outside of school. The goal is to monitor attendance daily and the aim is for them to achieve 90% or above by the end of the academic year.

Wave 4 - SLT/Att Team
These student are 80% to 50%. These have been linked to SLT members who will check in weekly and follow a 10in10. Home visits along with plans alongside safeguarding.

Wave 5 & 6 - JBU/MWO
These students are severely absent. JBU/MWO will work alongside JBT to seek alternate provisions/support for these students with Team Around School (TAS).

A letter from the Attendance office and/or phone call home by the Pastoral team/Attendance team will be sent for any student that is falling below 97% attendance, with an offer of an open discussion around the barriers students or families may have to attending school.

Pastoral Leaders & Attendance team meet with those who have fallen into the 96.9 – 90% category to discuss any support that can be offered (internal and external) and the student is put on a target card. If the meeting is not attended by parent/carer, the meeting goes ahead with targets set and this is communicated through a letter and a phone call by either the PLS or Attendance team.

After two weeks on a target card, a review meeting is held. If the targets for attendance have not been met, new targets are set within a clear time frame and parents/carers informed that they could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if there is no improvement.

If there is no improvement and there is enough evidence then there will be a move to pursue prosecution or Fixed Penalty Notice.

Throughout any stage it may be appropriate to engage with outside agencies to support students and families with attendance. Students with poor, inconsistent or decreasing attendance are discussed in triangulation with other leaders in the school as part of our safeguarding process.

9.4 Teachers can use these tips to improve attendance to their lessons:

- welcome all students – make them feel safe and valued
- use praise, emphasising the importance of attendance for learning
- follow up punctuality issues at the end of the lesson using an appropriate sanction where relevant
- give students “the big picture” about the unit of work
- integrate returning students and inconsistent attenders by considering key tools such as differentiation, peer support, seating plans and catchup material
- know who is attending and who isn't - find out why
- include in the plenary a taster to hook students in for the next lesson
- use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance and relate to improved learning
- use the school's reward system to promote the link between good attendance and effective learning
- ensure the student has access to any work missed during the time of absence.
- give positive feedback upon absentees returning to support future attendance

10. Attendance Procedures for Requested Leave of Absence (including holidays)

PCS discourages parents/carers from taking their child out of school during term dates. The Headteacher will not authorise absence in school time unless in exceptional circumstances. In the case of an unauthorised holiday, the Local Authority will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school.

If there are exceptional circumstances, a completed leave of absence form must be sent to the Headteacher a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the absence, though government guidelines are followed. Leave of absence forms can be collected from the school's Reception. The maximum number of absence authorisations possible is one per academic year, even under exceptional circumstances.

The Department for Education guidance regarding taking holidays in term time is very clear and we as a school follow this closely. Consequently, if you book your child out of school for a holiday of less than 5 days and subsequently your child is off sick before the holiday is due to start or has extra days off after the holiday finishes, we will ask for a copy of the holiday booking or a doctor's certificate, to confirm either the holiday dates or the child's sickness. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the school referring the family to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service with the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. Please be aware that the school can also issue a Fixed Penalty Notice independently.

Details of section 444 of the Education act 2024:

New Penalty pathway

5 consecutive days of absence during term time

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years) The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

11. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the School Attendance Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) with the most recent publication being issued in May 2022, the DfE's Statutory Guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures, and refers to the DfE's Guidance on the School Census which explains the persistent absence threshold. These are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996 The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Anti-social behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Parenting Contract and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Sentencing Act (2020) The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (2007)
- The Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Education (Working Together to Improve School Attendance) February 2024

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Department for Education Attendance codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Scenario</u>
/	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
<u>Attending a place other than the school</u>		
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
<u>Absent – leave of absence</u>		
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
<u>Absent – other authorised reasons</u>		
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
<u>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</u>		
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
<u>Absent – unauthorised absence</u>		
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
<u>Administrative codes</u>		
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