



Watford Grammar School for Girls

Attendance Policy

Working together to improve School attendance

This policy adopted	September 2022
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Committee Responsible	Curriculum
Non-Statutory	

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1. Purpose, Scope and Principles

The purpose of the policy is to provide an agreed framework to enable consistent practices and procedures to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

Key Principles:

Our school aims to meet its obligations regarding school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to 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 lessons.

As a school we aim to:

Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 97%

Maintain parents'/carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance

Maintain good timekeeping and punctuality

Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and poor attendance

Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically

Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with

Regular attenders find learning more satisfying

Regular attenders settle into school more easily

2. 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:

- The Education Act 1996- Part 6
- The Education Act 2002- Part 3
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006- Part 7
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working together to improve school attendance May 2022
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance May 2022

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

2.1. Associated policies:

This policy should be read alongside these documents:

- Child protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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 and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- 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

The Governor with specific responsibility for attendance is: Camilla Woods

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jo Shrimpton and can be contacted via j.shrimpton@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

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
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Taking calls and emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- 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 LAAO and other welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer for Years 7-11 is Andie Nunes and can be contacted via absence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

For absences relating to Sixth Form students, you can email: sixthformabsence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

3.5 Form tutors/class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, and for every lesson taught thereafter on SIMS

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their daughter attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their daughter's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their daughter.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every registration and timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1. Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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

(See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes).

We will also record:

- 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
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and kept open until 8.40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.20pm (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and at 2.00pm (Friday) and kept open until 2.30pm and 2.10pm respectively

4.2. Unplanned absence: Procedures for parents/carers in the case of absence of their child

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible. The school has a dedicated absence reporting line so that parents/carers can inform the school when their daughter is not able to attend school. Parents/carers are requested to call or email as early as possible on each day that the pupil does not attend, (preferably by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible) not just on the first day. If parents/carers have done this on each day, there is no need for them to write a note when their daughter returns to school.

(Please ring 01923 442788 or email absence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk)

For absences relating to Sixth Form students, you can email: sixthformabsence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents/carers 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.

4.3. 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.

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.

Parents/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4. Lateness and punctuality

It is important for pupils to arrive punctually to school. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class.

- When pupils have morning registration, they must be in their Form Room by 8.25 am to be ready for registration at 8.30 am. Pupils arriving after this time will be required to sign in at the main reception.
- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- Pupils are also expected to arrive promptly to Afternoon Registration. Pupils who arrive after the register has been taken will be marked with an 'L'.
- Pupils who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. This is effectively an absence.
- Punctuality will be monitored by the Form Tutor and Head of Year. Frequent lateness will be challenged by the Form Tutor, who will work with the pupil and family to resolve causes of lateness. The Head of Year will become involved in cases of persistent lateness or if there are Safeguarding concerns. This may then be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in school.
- Pupils are expected to arrive to lessons promptly. Pupils who arrive late may also be marked with an 'L'. If pupil is more than 5 minutes late then the number of minutes should be recorded. All lateness will be challenged by the subject teacher. If this becomes frequent or persistent, then this should be referred to the Head of Year or Head of Department.

- All lateness is recorded daily. The number of minutes late and the reason for lateness if known will also be recorded.

4.5. Following up absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, or if the reason given for absence is not satisfactory, the school may consider a home visit, involving an education welfare officer or the Police. Any such action will be recorded on CPOMS.
- For absences over a 5-day period, the school will require supporting medical evidence.

4.6. Attendance during the school day

The school has a system in place if a pupil does not attend a lesson, but she was in the previous lessons. When the teacher registers the lesson, he/she will contact the relevant staff who will then begin a search for that student. If a pupil is not found following a search, then the parents and possibly the police will be informed.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

Parents/carers are reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters, the school prospectus, open evenings, and reports. Termly reports to parents indicate whether a pupil's attendance is Green (97-100%) Amber (92.1-96.9%) Red (<92%)

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1. Granting approval for term-time absence

The school is always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss because of term time leave. There is no entitlement to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in 'exceptional circumstances' at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the governing body. The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to apply in writing to the Headteacher well in advance of requested absence and before booking tickets or making travel arrangements.

5.2. Authorised Absence

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Close family bereavement

- 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.

5.3. Unauthorised Absence

There are times when pupils are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Some examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Parent’s illness
- Caring for a younger sibling
- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- To celebrate a birthday
- Term time holiday/Cheap flights

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, absence will be recorded as ‘unauthorised’. If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action. (Refer to section 9)

5.4 Study leave

Study leave is not granted by default and is only granted to pupils in Year 11 once the external exams have started. Provision will still be made available for pupils who wish to revise in school.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

6.1 Encouraging good attendance.

Each pupil will be encouraged to attend school every day and to be punctual to lessons. Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded. Reward certificates will be awarded on a termly basis for pupils achieving 100% attendance. 100% attendance means no absences except for the following reasons:

- Up to 3 days religious holiday
- Sporting & school organised trips

If by the end of the Summer Term a girl has achieved 100% for the full school year, she will receive a certificate to mark this achievement.

- One full year equals a bronze certificate
- Two equals silver
- Three equals gold
- Four equals platinum
- Five equals diamond

6.2 Attendance monitoring by the school

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors pupil absence daily and follows up unexplained absences by phone calls, emails, and letters as necessary.
- Provides regular attendance reports of lates and absences to Heads of Year, and Key Stage Directors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- 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.
- Publish attendance rates on the school website and in the Governing Body's Annual Report.

6.3 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Consider involving the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO)
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Inform the pupil's social worker of any unexplained absences (if applicable).

Parents are expected to:

- Contact attendance officer, Head of Year or Pastoral Directors for more detailed support on attendance.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.

6.4 Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

7. Sixth Form

For absences relating to Sixth Form students, please email: sixthformabsence@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk

7.1 PM Registration

Year 13 students have permission to sign out at the office or using the scanners if they do not have a lesson after 12.20pm. Year 12 students will remain on site until lunchtime and do not need to return if they do not have afternoon lessons.

7.2 Lunchtime

Year 12 and 13 students are permitted to leave the school premises during lunchtime. Students must sign out at the office or using the scanners.

7.3 Driving Lessons

Sixth Form students may apply to use non lesson time during the school day for driving lessons. Parents/carers can apply in writing to the Head of Year, detailing the name of the driving school and the times of the lessons. The school may refuse permission if there are ongoing concerns regarding the progress or attendance of the pupil. On the day and time of the driving lesson the pupil must sign out and in at the school office. The absence

will be recorded as a 'B' (see Appendix 1). They must come back for any lessons or to sign out at the end of the day.

8. Leavers/ Children at risk of Missing Education

The school will only remove a pupil from the register on the prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016).

Regulation 12(6) states

‘Where the name of a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register, the proprietor must make a return to the local authority for that pupil as soon as the ground for their deletion under regulation 8 is met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil’s name is deleted from the register.

Regulation 12(7) details the information schools must include in the return, namely

- (a) the full name of the pupil;
- (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides;
- (c) at least one telephone number at which any parent with whom the pupil normally resides can be contacted in an emergency;
- (d) the particulars specified pursuant to regulation 5(1)(ca) if applicable;* (see below)
- (e) the particulars specified pursuant to regulation 5(1)(g) if applicable;** (see below)
- (f) the ground under regulation 8 upon which their name is to be deleted from the admission register

*5(1)(ca) – ‘where a parent of the pupil notifies the proprietor of the school or a person authorised by the proprietor of the school that the pupil will normally reside with a parent at a specified other address in the future, whether in addition to or instead of the address at which the pupil currently normally resides, the following information must be provided to the school:-

- (i) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will newly normally reside,
- (ii) the specified other address, and
- (iii) the date from which it is expected the child will normally reside there, where it is reasonably practicable for the proprietor to obtain that information’

**5(1)(g) – ‘where a parent of the pupil notifies the proprietor or a person authorised by the proprietor of the school that the pupil –

- (i) is also registered at another school; or
- (ii) will be attending a specified other school in the future,

the name of that other school and the first date on which the pupil attended or is due to attend that school, where it is reasonably practicable for the proprietor to obtain that information’

If a pupil leaves and we do not have information, about where they have gone, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try and locate the child.

At Watford Grammar School for Girls we have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

We put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, we hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Local authorities have a duty⁸ to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

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

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

All schools must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full-time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DCSF and the Local Authority. The School Attendance Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

⁸ Under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). There is separate statutory guidance for local authorities on how to carry out this duty (including advice for schools) – at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

8.1 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating at home, the school will request a meeting with parents/carers, and other agencies, where possible to ensure the child's best education is at the heart of the decision.

9. Fixed Penalty Notice

We use penalty notices to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted. Penalty notices may be issued once a pupil has 15 or more sessions (a session is a half day) of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous school term. The absences may have occurred in a block or a series of odd days and/or unauthorised holiday.

It is the Headteacher's decision on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised based on the information provided by you as the parent/carer.

If we decide to apply for a penalty notice, we make this application to the Local Authority, and it must comply with Hertfordshire Code of Conduct.

Once issued there is no statutory right of appeal however the Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. This does not mean that a notice will be withdrawn because you disagree with it.

Payment of penalty notices

- The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.
- Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.
- Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.
- Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, Parentpay or debit/credit card is accepted.

Withdrawal of penalty notices

The Local Authority may withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- Has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- Ought not to have been issued
- Ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- Has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority.

⁹ Under regulation 12 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016).

APPENDIX 1

Absence and 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting 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 reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools. The consortia schools however, must ensure they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved, which must be shared with the 'main' school.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session 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. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

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 unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews 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 educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, 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.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and 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 be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent/carer.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school, or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities, then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

