



HUNTCLIFF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026/27

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Responsible Body: Trust

Responsible School Officer: Mrs Todd

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Review Date	Updates
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance is everyone's business. Each stakeholder has clearly defined roles and responsibilities to promote good attendance for every child.

2.1 The Governing Board of Trustees

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
- The link governor responsible for attendance is Mr C Watson and can be contacted via the school email address enquiries@huntcliff.co.uk

2.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher/head of school 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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- The Headteacher is Miss Wilkinson and can be contacted via the school telephone or email address enquiries@huntcliff.co.uk
- Student 'leave of absence' requests

2.3 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/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Todd and can be contacted via the school phone number or email address enquiries@huntcliff.co.uk

2.4 The strategic lead for attendance

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 6)
- 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 relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.

2.5 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

The attendance officer is Ms Elliott and can be contacted via 01287 621010 opt 1 or attendance@huntcliff.co.uk

2.6 Form tutors and class teacher

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office within the first five minutes of tutor time and lessons. Form tutors are the first link for parents/carers when requiring contact with the school regarding their child's attendance to school and will work closely with parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance.

Form Tutors and Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Rewards – issuing and determining which students will receive them
- Communicating with students regarding their attendance
- Identifying attendance patterns and creating targets for students
- Using Class Charts to record interventions
- Issuing and monitoring target cards

2.7 School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the pastoral managers or attendance officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.8 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school on time, every day, all timetabled lessons and tutor on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.00 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and provide a reason for their absence
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

2.9 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Participate in targets and challenges to maintain good attendance

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students 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. The attendance register will be taken once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. All pupils will be registered at the same time. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

- 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 students of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student 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.

Students must arrive at school by 08:30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:30am and will be kept open until 09.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm, during period 4 and will be kept open until 01:00pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:00 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school [01287 621010 opt 1] (see also section 6).

Please note that parents/carers must leave a voicemail if the member of staff is unable to take the phone call at that time.

Absence due to illness will normally be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. The school may request medical evidence where a pupil's attendance is below 90% or where there are concerns about the frequency or pattern of illness-related absence.

We would encourage parents/carers to support regular attendance where a pupil is well enough to attend school. Minor illnesses, such as mild colds, headaches, or sore throats, do not always require absence, and parents/carers should use their judgement based on their child's individual circumstances and the severity of their symptoms.

In line with statutory guidance, the school will only request medical evidence where necessary and appropriate, and will consider the sensitivity of health-related barriers to attendance.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment with evidence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Absence for medical appointments will be authorised for the duration of the appointment and any reasonable travel time required to attend and return.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 4 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

If needed, parents/carers can request a leave of absence form via enquiries@huntcliff.co.uk or attendance@huntcliff.co.uk

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (between 8:30am and 9am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After 9:00am, once the register has closed, a pupil arriving late will be marked as absent using a U code to indicate an unauthorised absence
- Late students will be issued with a 15 minute breaktime detention. If this is not attended, it will escalate through the school's detention system.
- Students who are frequently late to school will be discussed with parents/carers to identify and remove barriers.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

Where a student fails to attend school as expected, or ceases to attend without explanation, the school will take the following actions:

- Email through Arbor the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If no response to the email is received, a call will be made to each contact until a reason for absence is found.
- If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may arrange a home visit or request a welfare check from external agencies where safeguarding concerns exist.

- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Where the reason for absence is unknown, the absence will initially be recorded using an N code. Parents/carers will be expected to provide a reason for the absence within five working days of the relevant session. If no reason is provided within this timeframe, the N code will be replaced with the appropriate unauthorised absence code.
- 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 the School Strategic Lead for Attendance.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via Arbor and progress updates issued termly. Parents/Carers can access attendance at any time via Arbor or class charts.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher/head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher/head of school's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents/carers, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the policies section on the school website [Policies](#). The headteacher/head of school may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a student's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

The headteacher/head of school will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance– where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’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
- Parent(s)/carers 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.
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the school in line with the attendance policy.

4.2 Term time absence for holidays

Any request for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will not be authorised.

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days) within 10 school weeks, consideration will be given if a referral should be made to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued or prosecution where repeated penalty notices have been issued. Where the threshold has not been met in the case of persistent avoidance, for example, repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, the school will have discretion to refer the case to the Local Authority. If in an individual case, the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

4.3 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carers should advise the school of the temporary address.

4.4 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised and support has been provided but not worked or engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence. This can be a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10-school-week period that may 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).

From Autumn Term 2024, the Local Authority will only issue 2 penalty notices to the same parents/carers 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/carers in respect of a particular student will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same student is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carers 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 for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

Further information about Redcar & Cleveland Council's attendance procedures can be found [here](#).

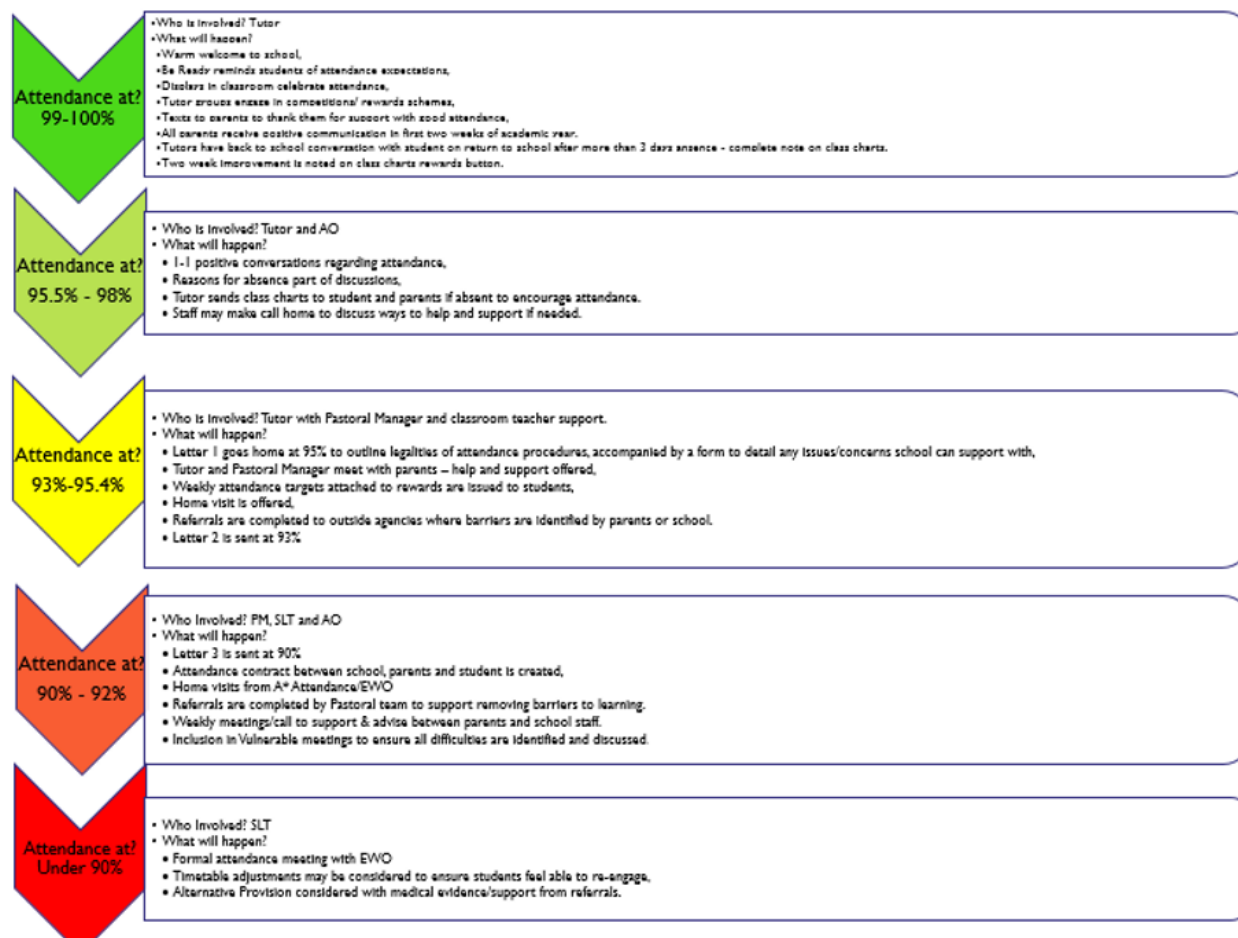
5. Strategies for promoting attendance

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for promoting attendance and managing absence, the attendance team, supported by Pastoral Leads, the school's Attendance Champion and Senior Leadership team will:

- Celebrate high attendance through celebration assemblies, social media, newsletters and other parent/carers communications
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance through half-termly challenges, targets, and reward schemes
- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance when patterns of absence emerge. These may include communication with home, letters to parents/carers, parent/carers meetings, devising an attendance plan with parents/carers, engaging with Local Authority attendance teams.

- The school will use attendance data in line with the 'Attendance Monitoring' section of this policy to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the student.

6. Attendance monitoring



6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels 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. The school will identify and monitor attendance patterns for key cohorts including pupils with SEND, pupils with a social worker, disadvantaged pupils, and young carers.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students whom 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
- Inform parents/carers through written communication of escalation to Attendance Case Conference procedures, involving parents/carers and offering interventions at each step.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mrs Todd, Assistant Headteacher for Attendance & Wellbeing. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. Truancy

Truancy is when a pupil deliberately misses part or all of a school session without the knowledge or permission of the school or parent/carer. This includes internal truancy, where a pupil is on the school site but does not attend a timetabled lesson, and external truancy, where a pupil is absent from school without permission.

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of students, and understand the importance of continuity in each student's learning. Any student with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a student might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, school will contact the parent/carer in order to assess the reasons behind the student not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents/carers of the student, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Children reported missing in school

Students will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a student going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing student will inform a member of staff on call via Class Charts
- The attendance officer and reflection member of staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- An available member of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - Classrooms
 - Toilets
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the student has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents/carers of the student will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/carers have had no contact from the student, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- Relevant information relating to the student's absence would be recorded by the most appropriate member of staff to the situation, using CPOMS.
- If the missing student has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located and returns to school, appropriate members of staff will check that they are safe and well, provide support where needed, and discuss the circumstances surrounding their absence.
- parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the student has been located.

The head of school/ senior leaders will take the appropriate action to ensure that students understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

12. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\)\(England\)\(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\)\(England\)\(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

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

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for students where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from July 2026 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2026'

Code	Description	Meaning
I	Present (AM)	Present
V	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence due to a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence
E	Pupil is excluded with no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (NOT a medical appointment)	Authorised Absence
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised Absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
J1	Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
V	Approved educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Approved work experience	Approved Educational Activity
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Educational Activity
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description	Unauthorised Absence
U	Pupil arrived after registers closed	Unauthorised Absence

Code	Description	Meaning
D	Dual registered (at another establishment)	Not counted in possible attendance
X	Non-compulsory school age children, not required to be in school	Not counted in possible attendance
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendance
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendance
Q	Lack of access arrangements provided by local authority	Not counted in possible attendance
Y1	Transport normally provided not being available	Not counted in possible attendance
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Not counted in possible attendance
Y3	School premises partially closed	Not counted in possible attendance
Y4	Whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendance
Y5	Pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendance

Present

Authorised Absence

Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised Absence

Not counted in possible attendance

N.B: The Department for Education states that if a pupil's absence is recorded using codes B or K, the nature of the approved education activity (in the case of code B) or education provision (in the case of code K) must also be recorded in the register.