



**MARICOURT
CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**
& SIXTH FORM CENTRE

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Mission Statement

Maricourt seeks to provide a living Catholic community which is rooted in Christian values and where growth and knowledge, respect love and fellowship are shared by all.

INSPIRE
WITH
MARICOURT

POLICY REVIEWED: September 2021
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Aims

The school aims to develop the whole person by keeping Christian truths and Gospel values before young people's minds and by encouraging them to live by such truths and values, however hard contemporary culture makes this; thereby forming young adults who have a well-rooted sense of relationship with Christ and His church.

The school aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all can take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

High levels of attendance and punctuality are essential for students to work to their full potential, be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them at school. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly.

Achieving high attendance is a necessity in preparing students for future working life as an adult.

Students should be at the School, on time every day that school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise the responsibility and obligation they have to make sure that students attend regularly. This policy sets out how the School, its partners and Parents/Carers can work together to achieve this.

Statutory Framework

School attendance is subject to various Education laws including the Education Act 2011 (Student Registration 2007) (England Regulations 2006), (School Attendance Targets) (England, Regulations 2007) (England Regulations 2010). This school policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice each day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets. These will reflect both national and Sefton's attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

Maintaining a high level of attendance at Maricourt Catholic High School is the responsibility of everyone involved with the school community including students, parents and staff.

The Importance of Regular Attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence additionally disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring students' regular attendance at school is the **legal responsibility of Parents/Carers. By law, all children of compulsory school age must attend school.**

Poor attendance not only undermines a child's education and future life chances but it can also put children at risk, can compromise personal safety and encourage anti-social behaviour.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – Parents/Carers, students and all members of school staff.

To maintain a focus on this the School will:

Report to Parents/Carers regularly on how their child is performing at school. This will include information about their attendance and punctuality.

Celebrate good attendance in assemblies on a regular basis, through daily Tutor Time and by displaying individual and class achievements;

Reward good or improving attendance through, certificates, events and trips, both in and outside of school.

Absence procedures

If a student is absent parents should:

- Contact school by 9am ideally on the first day of absence on the dedicated telephone number.
- Send a note in on the first day that the student returns with an explanation of the absence
- Provide some form of medical evidence for absences that extend to a week or beyond (5 school days; this can be in the form of a Doctor's note, copy of a prescription or sight of prescribed medication).

If a student is absent the school will endeavour to contact parents/carers via telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if a message (that explains the absence) has not been received. This will then trigger a staged response.

- The attendance team will inform the Progress Leader of the absence
- The Progress leader will discuss this with the Form Tutor
- The Progress leader will speak to the student
- Parents may be invited to school to speak with the Progress Leader
- Senior Leaders with responsibility for Attendance will hold a panel interview with parents and students
- The Local Authority will be contacted

Contacts

There are times when school will need to contact parent for a range of issues via telephone, text or email, including absence, so it is essential that the school has up to date contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers and email addresses throughout the year and we ask parents / carers to inform us of any changes.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If students are late at the start of the day they can miss assemblies, work, vital information and news for the day and do not spend time with their Form Tutor. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons. Persistent poor punctuality will result in sanctions being applied e.g. an attendance or punctuality detention and potentially a contract.

How we manage lateness

The school day begins at 8.50, a bell is rung and students are expected to be registered in *their Formclass* at 8.55am.

Students can access the Dining Room from 8 am (but should remain there until 8.45am when they can go to their form classrooms)

Registration is called during this time. Students are marked late if they are not present when the register is taken.

Registers are closed at 9.05 am.

In accordance with the Regulations, if students arrive after **9.30** they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence** unless we are given reason then this will become a late mark.

Students who experience punctuality or attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their Form Tutor and, if the need should arise, from their Student Progress Leader/Assistant Student Progress Leader.

If a student has a persistent late record, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Progressleader.

Students whose punctuality and/or attendance are very good will be presented with awards.

If a student is prevented for any reason from attending and parents have not notified the school the absence must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents.

Parents will be informed of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication. Parents/Carers can approach the school at any time if they experience problems getting their child to the school on time.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the Parents/Carers), as either *AUTHORISED* or *UNAUTHORISED*.

Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks. Registers are legal documents so the school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor student punctuality and guard against truancy. Information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers, preferably in writing.

Authorised absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in School time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Medical appointments, if possible, should be made as late in the day as possible to allow your child to be registered for the afternoon session. Medical appointments should not take all day.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave of absence" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off 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. (registers close at 9.05am each day).
- a child arriving late after that time will be recorded as U (unauthorised).
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- oversleeping
- absent to look after an unwell sibling
- inadequate uniform
- confusion over term dates

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school.

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between school, parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, parents/carers should not condone their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter.

Exceptional leave in term time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off during school term time to have exceptional leave. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice/Fine.

Holiday during Term Time

It is the school's policy not to grant holidays in term time.

Exceptional Leave

Students have a total of 13 weeks holiday a year so Parents/Carers should only request that they be able to take their child out of school under **exceptional circumstances**. This is known as exceptional leave and must be applied for in writing addressed to the Headteacher.

In this letter Parents/Carers should make clear the reasons why it is necessary to take their child/children out of school and why these are exceptional.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education and is not acceptable.

All application letters for exceptional leave must be made two weeks in advance of the event.

It is at the discretion of the Headteacher that **a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised**.

In making a decision the Headteacher will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

Medical appointments

Parents should avoid making medical or dental appointments for their child during school hours; if an appointment has to be made during the school day we expect the student to be in before and/or after the appointment, depending on the time. The School *will not authorise a full day's absence for a medical appointment such as dentist/orthodontist*. If a student is absent for the full day *we will mark them as unauthorised for either the AM or PM roll call*.

Students should attend school where possible before/after their treatment

Persistent absenteeism [as per Government guidance]

When a student becomes a 'persistent absentee' the Local Authority has to be notified.

This applies when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects.

The school expects parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

This could involve Parents/carers coming to an Attendance Panel at school to develop an Individual Attendance Plan to improve the situation.

If student attendance still fails to improve this becomes a **Serious Behaviour Concern**.

In most cases this can be resolved within school via Progress Leaders and the Attendance Team.

Failing that the school will then use a range of strategies to resolve the situation.

These include:

- Multi-Agency Meeting (Social Care, School Nurse, CAMHS, Youth Offending Team, Young Carers etc.
- Early help assessment referral
- Fixed Term penalty for Parent/Carer
- Educational Supervision Order (Magistrates Court)
- Prosecution of Parent/Carer. (Magistrates Court)

All absence is monitored thoroughly and regularly.

Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absentee mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority.

Parents/Carers will be informed of the concern immediately. We automatically inform Parents/Carers when absence passes 5%. Persistent absentee students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. This may also be combined with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Procedures for following up absence

A reason for a period of absence is always required. We will contact parents who have not offered a reason and will mark the absence as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

If a student is absent without explanation, the form tutor will ask the student to provide a letter from his/her parent to explain the absence. If an explanation is not received a letter will be sent to the parents. The absence will remain unauthorised unless an acceptable explanation is received.

If a student is persistently absent, or late, and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer during his/her consultation visit.

All messages from parents regarding absence/lateness are recorded for reference.

Penalty Notice proceedings

Penalty Notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Welfare Service based on requests from schools.

Maricourt Catholic High School follows the most recent 'Procedures for Issuing Education-related Penalty Notices' from Sefton Council (April 2015).

The circumstances in which a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued include:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Unwarranted delayed return from leave of absence (without school agreement)
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed
- Part of the legal process between the school and local authority (i.e. at Attendance Panel Reviews)
- Truancy, including attendance and exclusion sweeps (formerly truancy sweeps).

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absences by any student in the current term **and/or** eighteen (18) session lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will also trigger this process.

Payment of a penalty within 21 days of receipt of the notice is £60 for each parent. Payment after this time, but within 28 days of receipt of the notice is £120, [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013].

Penalty notices may also be issued if students who are excluded appear in a public place without good reason.

Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Welfare Service to ensure that the request meets the terms of the Code of Conduct

Taking the process further

Whilst the intention of the School Attendance Panel meeting is that the attendance will improve, if the attendance deteriorates by the target review date the Local Authority may recommend legal action is taken. This could include prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, Education Supervision Orders or Parenting Orders.

Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence: Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an Education Supervision Order (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a Parenting Order. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If the unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and Local Authority can be cited.

The role of the Educational Welfare Officer

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

This is nearly always successful. The Educational Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist we will invite the Parent/Carer to a school attendance panel.

At this meeting, strategies will be discussed to improve attendance.

Should the situation continue, the Educational Welfare Officer may seek advice from the Local Authority in respect of any legal proceedings.

Children Missing in Education

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour Safety and wellbeing) and the Educational Welfare Officer. If a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family moves away from the area but does not register with another school, the school will alert the Local Authority who will then take action according to the Child Missing in Education Policy and procedures.

Movement of children between Local Authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

Publication of attendance figures

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Roles and responsibilities

Improving attendance, what parents/carers can do:-

- Provide **two** emergency contact numbers to the school.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence.
- Try to make all medical appointments (doctors, dentist and hospital) out of school time. Obviously, this is not always possible but, in such cases, try to minimise the disruption to the day by getting an early morning appointment so that your child can attend afterwards OR a late afternoon appointment so that she can complete most of her timetable before leaving.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being on time for school ensuring they have a realistic bedtime and will not be too tired to get up in the morning for school. Equipment should be prepared the night before. Regularly checking your child's planner can help you to do this.
- Discourage your child from staying overnight with friends during the week. This sometimes leads to them both being late (or not attending at all) the next day.
- Leave of absence during term time is not a parental right. If there are special or exceptional circumstances, please contact the Head teacher and a decision will be made if the absence can be authorised or not.
- Talk positively about going to school.
- Monitor your child's internet and social media use to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties that may prevent them from wanting to attend school.
- Take any worries seriously but do not show that you are unduly concerned. Believe that they will be sorted out. Contact school before the concerns escalate.

Improving attendance

What school does

- Marks the registers in accordance with the law twice a day.
- Carry out robust first-day calling procedures including priority routine for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- Informs any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Carry out robust first-day calling procedures including priority routine for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.
- Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that **only** the school can authorise absence.
- Contacts parents / carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Encourage parents to accept support through an Early Help Assessment where it is deemed appropriate.
- Monitor pupils who are supported by the In Year Fair Access Panel and those who attend alternative provision including Complimentary Education

- Work with external agencies to maintain good attendance contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.
- Provides re – integration support for students returning from absence.
- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Inform parents of individual pupil’s attendance record each term at Parents’ Evening.
- Works with relevant external agencies if a students’ attendance becomes a concern, i.e. – Social Care, Early Help Services, Police, YOT, and SEND.
- Make referrals to the Local Authority School Attendance Panel where pupils’ attendance levels are becoming a cause for concern.
- Make referrals to the School Nurse team where appropriate to seek advice to support the pupil.
- Works in partnership with the Local Authority to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism sometimes utilising legal interventions.
- Campaign as a means of working with parents to resolve issues affecting levels of attendance

Request to Electively Home Educate

Our school works with the Local Authority to ensure that those parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education (EHE). We follow up-to-date guidance that is published. If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan or is open to a social worker we work closely with the Complementary Education Service, SEND and Children’s’ Social Care.

The Team

Designated Senior Lead is Miss Julie Bennett

Whole school Attendance Officer Mrs Marie Hunter

Assistant Miss Christine Corkery

Assistant (pt) Mrs Julie Jervis

Learning mentor Mr Michael Kirby

Learning mentor Mrs Alison Turner

Local Authority support

Attendance and locality manager Mrs Tracey McKeating

Admissions Miss Charlotte Royle

CME Officer Mrs Carol Blundell

LADO Ms Tracey Holyhead

Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

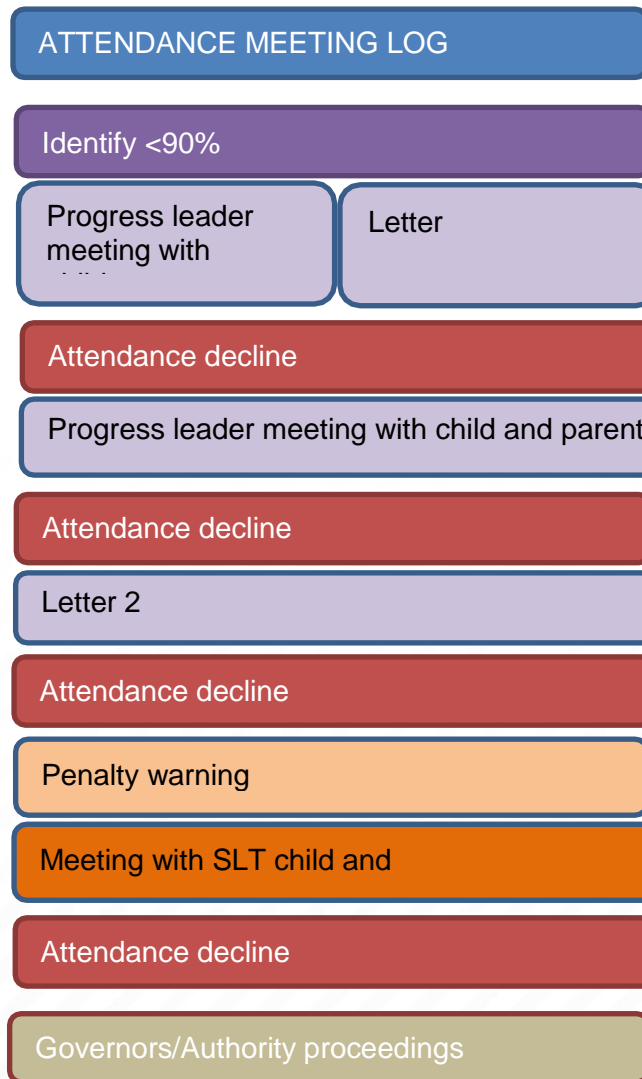
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education-2016>

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Education Act 2011 Student Registration 2007 England Regulations 2006, School Attendance Targets England, Regulations 2007) (England Regulations 2010 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Appendix 1

Our staged approach for persistent absentees



COVID related appendices

Appendix 1-Attendance expectation and regulations

Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year

The Government has amended regulations to enable schools, in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, to continue to record where a pupil does not attend in circumstances relating to COVID-19.

Attendance expectations

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence;
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct;
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education.

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Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19

This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC);
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19.

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

The [schools COVID-19 operational guidance](#) sets out when pupils should self-isolate and when they ought to be tested in the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply.

In line with current legislation, and guidance from PHE (and its successor the UKHSA) and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness).

Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result. If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code X in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code X in the register. Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we expect schools to offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Appendix 2 Attendance Codes

National Absence and Attendance Codes including sub-attendance codes COVID-19

The national codes enable our school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. 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.

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.

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.

- 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).

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 in advance 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.

Sub codes

In March 2021 the government defined and published a set of sub codes relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Below are the defined a set of sub codes for schools to use to consistently record non-attendance related to COVID-19 and help them to complete the educational settings status form.

Recording non-attendance related to coronavirus (COVID-19) Set of sub-codes

The set of sub codes to record non-attendance related to COVID-19 are:

Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school

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

Code X02: Pupil self-isolating with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms

This code is used for pupils who are self-isolating because they have symptoms of COVID-19 but they have not yet had a positive test.

Code X03: Not applicable for this academic year

Code X04: Not applicable for this academic year

Code X05: Pupil required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)

This code is used for pupils who are required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) red list rules.

Code X06: Pupil who is clinically extremely vulnerable if shielding is advised

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. However, this code is used if shielding is advised nationally or in a local area by DHSC, Public Health England (PHE) or UK Health Security Agency. In this scenario, pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. DHSC / PHE Guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.

Code X07: Pupil advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in government advice

This code is for pupils who as part of local or national restrictions to education settings are specifically advised not to attend school for public health reasons related to COVID-19.

Code X08: Pupil not attending school in line with advice from Directors of Public Health as part of outbreak management

This code is for pupils who are advised not attend school, for public health reasons, as part of formal contingency planning (sometimes called outbreak management) advice related to COVID-19. This code can only be used to record restricted attendance where this has been advised by the relevant public health authority.

Code X09: Pupil or student required to self-isolate as a close contact of a confirmed case

This code is for pupils or students who are advised to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are not fully vaccinated and are over the age of 18 years and 6 months. There is no requirement for children or young people under the age of 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccine status, to self-isolate whilst awaiting the results of their PCR test where they have been a close contact.

Code I01: Illness

This code is used for pupils who are absent because of non-COVID-19 related illness or sickness.

Code I02: Illness confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)

This code is used for pupils who are absent because they have tested positive for COVID-19.

Management information software suppliers are implementing these changes at their earliest convenience.

Where schools are using these sub-codes, they will still need to consider on an individual basis whether Code X is the appropriate code for a given non-attendance. They will need to ensure that Code X is only used where a pupil does not attend school because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from either Public Health England (PHE), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

Where a pupil's non-attendance does not meet these requirements, it should not be recorded as Code X and schools should consider whether another code can be used.