

'Loving to Learn, Learning to Love'



ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Mark's CE Primary School



DATED 19th August 2024

Approved by Governors	Review Date	Review Date
September 2024	September 2025	

'Working together to improve school attendance' (August 2024) states that

- Improving attendance is everyone's business.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, every day that the school is open.

Roles and responsibilities of staff at St Mark's CE Primary School

Name of Staff Member	Roles and Responsibilities	Contact Details
Deborah Sadler	Attendance Champion	If you wish to contact any staff members that have a responsibility for attendance, please contact the school office via email or telephone. office@stmarks.orchardct.org.uk 01782 234411
Shabana Khan	Attendance Manager/ Home-School Link Worker	
Jodie Thomas	Safeguarding Leader (DSL)	
Deborah Sadler	Head Teacher	
??	Governor for School Attendance.	

Good attendance is important because:

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and more fun.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training.
- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and low attendance.

Impact of absence and punctuality on attainment

Attendance of pupils Academic year 2023- 2024	% of achievement at greater depth or expected in mathematics KS2 assessment	% of achievement at greater depth or expected in reading KS2 assessment
96% - 100% Up to 25 days off per year	70%	67%
0-90% 26 days of absence per year	45%	54%

The figures above clearly show the impact of absence on a child's academic progress.

Children who have a higher percentage of attendance (96 – 100%) achieved higher marks in mathematics and reading than the children who have lower attendance (0-90%).

LATENESS IS LOST LEARNING (over the academic year)
5 minutes late each day = 3 days of lost learning
10 minutes late each day = 6.5 days of lost learning
15 minutes late each day = 10 days of lost learning

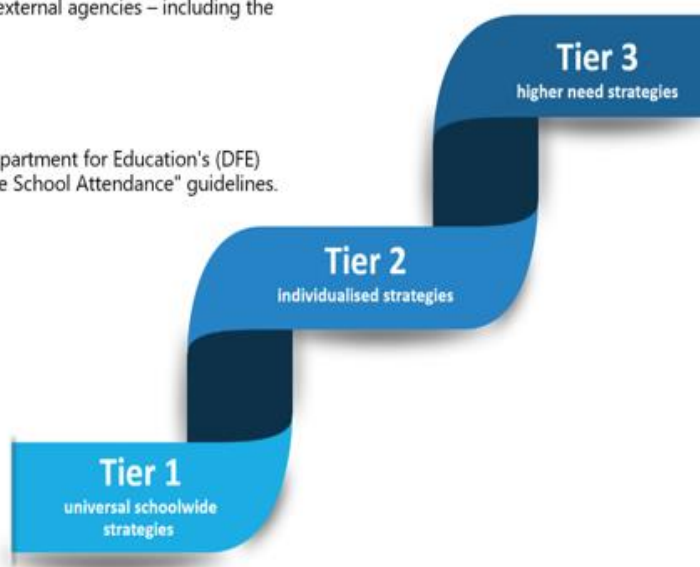
Other impacts of absence

As well as the attainment of children falling below the expected levels, they can also experience other worries and issues. Work may be missed so the following day's/week's work will be difficult to access and understand. They will often find after a period of absence it emotionally and socially difficult to return back to school. Also, pupils having low attendance have more social relationships problems, causing them difficulties in building and maintaining friendships within school and outside of school.

At St Mark's CE Primary School, we have adopted a tiered approach to support attendance:

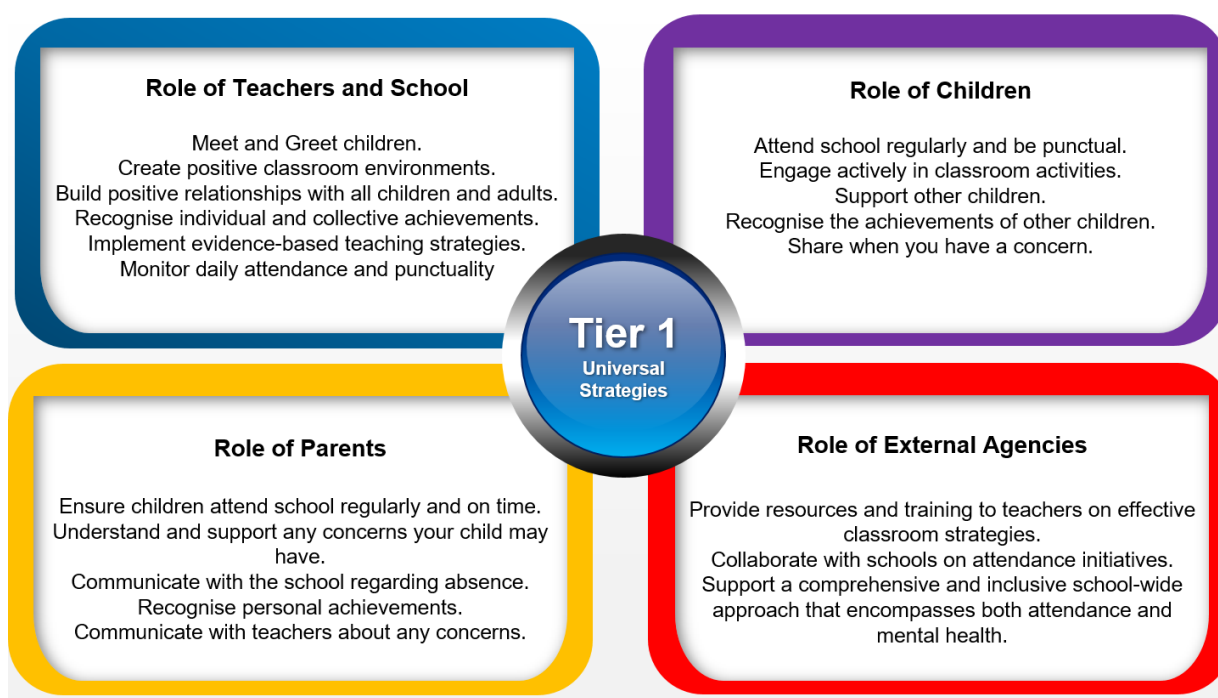
A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents and external agencies – including the Local Authority.

The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidelines.



Tier 1

- We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel the school is a place they want to be.
- We create a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.
- Parents/Carers and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and Staff of St Mark's CE Primary School share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.
- Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.



School times

- School breakfast club opens at 8am for parents who have requested a place for their child (If you require a place, please book on ParentPay).
- School gates open at 8.30am at main site.
- School doors open at 8.30am for all pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- The school gate closes and learning starts at 8.40am.
- All pupils are expected to be in school by 8.40am when the gates close, after this time your child is classed as late on the register.
- At the Nursery Site, gates open at 8:50am and gates (and registration) closes at 9:00am.
- Parents/Carers are expected to accompany their child to the school office if they are late, where they will be asked to complete a late slip. This will register your child with a late mark on the register. If your child is persistently late a meeting with parents will be held and support put into place where needed.
- Registers close at 8.45am, however if your child arrives after 9.15am they will be marked with a 'U' code which is an unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on their attendance and will be discussed with parents/carers through a meeting with Education Welfare Officer and/or Mrs Khan.
- School finishes at 3:10pm for all pupils in Reception to Year 6, with the Reception doors opening at 3:00pm. The end of the Nursery school day is 3:00pm.
- If your child is not collected by 3.20pm (or 3:10pm at Nursery site), the late collection policy applies.

How to report an absence

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day when school is open and to notify the school by 9am, if their child is absent for any reason on the first morning of the absence and then every other day.

Ways to report the absence:

- By telephoning the school office 01782 234411 (option 1) or the Nursery office on 01782 237125.
- In person at the school office
- By sharing medical card/ letter/ text with the school office in advance
- By completing a leave of absence request form (available from the school office)

Please **do not** use any other method of reporting an absence or sending medical evidence. Emails and Class Dojo are not acceptable ways to communicate absences to school or Nursery.

Absence codes

Authorised Absence

It is at the Head teacher's discretion for an absence to be authorised. This may be for

- Illness (medical evidence may be requested)
- Funeral – up to 1 day, if more is required, please contact the school to discuss
- Wedding – this absence will need to be requested in advance
- Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted as authorised absence for one day as advised by the L.A. An additional day taken will be marked as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is recorded when a child does not attend school for a valid reason or the parent does not contact the school or school cannot contact the parents on the day of absence.

If a pupil does fall into the category of 'Persistent Absence' you will be required to provide medical evidence in order for the absence to be authorised, if no evidence is shared with the school, the register will be marked as an 'O' code. Following the school policy, leave of absence and holidays will not be authorised in term time.

Leave of Absence requests

Taking a leave of absence during term time will affect your child the same as other absences. As a school we expect parents to support their child's education by not taking out of school during term time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law for leave of absence in term time to go on holiday.

Unauthorised absences will be referred to Education Welfare and fines will be issued following these referrals as per Stoke on Trent Local Authority Guidance.

To request a leave of absence

- Parents must request a leave of absence at least 4 weeks before the planned leave. A request form is available from the school office.
- A discussion will be had with either the EWO or Mrs Khan to discuss the reason and length of the absence. During the discussion parents will be informed of the possible outcomes and the process of referrals.
- The request will then be placed with the head teacher, who will follow the statutory guidance dated August 19th 2024.
- Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request by letter and/or telephone.
- Leave in term time is not authorised and will be marked as a 'G' code on the register, this will then be referred in to Education Welfare.
- If there is no permission requested, a suspected leave of absence letter will be sent to the parents asking for a reason of the absence stating if there is no contact made an automatic referral to Education Welfare will be sent. If there is contact a decision will be made by the head teacher and the parent will be informed.
- **If a child is absent from school for 20 consecutive days following the start of the first day of absence, they will be taken off roll at the end of the 20th school day and so will lose their position at St Mark's CE Primary School and the parent/carer will need to reapply to St Mark's or apply to another educational establishment upon their return.**
- Following the safeguarding procedures within school this will be reported to the local authority as set out in the Stoke-on-Trent Council Promoting Regular School Attendance – Children Missing Education (CME) guidance.

The information below explains the new statutory guidance for School Penalty Notices for Attendance

Please note this process does not reset each year, it will escalate with each Penalty Notice issued.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice are issued to each parent, for each absent child.

For Example: 2 siblings absent for leave during term time would result in each parent receiving 2 separate Penalty Notices.

Third Offence

(Within 3 years)

The third time a Penalty Notice is issued for leave in Term Time or irregular attendance, the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court, where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be imposed.

Note: Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on Parents future DBS certificates as a 'Failure to safeguard a child's education'.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-school week period.

These Absences can be late after register closes, Unauthorised Absences and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences. They can also be a combination of any of the above.

Second Offence

(Within 3 Years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be **£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.**

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority on the instruction from the School/Academy, in line with the Department for Education legislation. Once issued these cannot be withdrawn.

Where possible, please arrange these out of school hours. When possible, we expect children to attend prior and after the appointment. Authorisation of these absences will only occur if medical evidence is provided to school. If a child does attend prior to or after the appointment the session will be authorised and a present will be recorded.

Monitoring Absences

At St Mark's, attendance is regularly monitored and data is analysed by Mrs Khan, the Education Welfare Officer, and the School Attendance Champion (and Headteacher), Mrs Sadler.

As part of daily and weekly monitoring school will:

- Call on the first day of absence, if the absence has not been called in by parents/carers. If there is no contact made via telephone, a text message will be sent to the first contact on the child's records. If there is no contact made then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.
- On the second day of absence, if there has been no contact with parents or carers, contact will be tried again with all contacts on the child's records, a text message to contact 1 and if there are any welfare concerns, Mrs Khan will complete a home visit to ascertain the reason for the child's absence. A calling card will be left at the home address, requesting contact be made with the school.
- On the third day of absence, there may be a home visit from the Education Welfare Officer and / or Mrs Khan. Again, a calling card will be left from either professional requesting contact. An email and text will be sent to the registered email address and contact 1.
- By day 5 a CME (Child Missing in Education) a referral process will be started to the Local Authority. This will state the contact attempts made and the results of these contacts, attendance percentages as well as the last date the children were in school and any other details that may be relevant.
- We will continue to attempt contact via calls, texts, emails and home visits until the 20th day of absence. Upon the 20th day of absence, the child will be taken off roll from St Mark's CE Primary at the end of that school day, and a new application to either St Mark's CE Primary or another educational establishment will need to be completed by parents/ carers upon any return.

All parents are informed half termly and annually of their child's overall attendance and their attendance compared to the school average.

Regular discussions will be held with teachers, Mrs Khan, the EWO and parents/carers if their child's attendance is identified as being a concern.

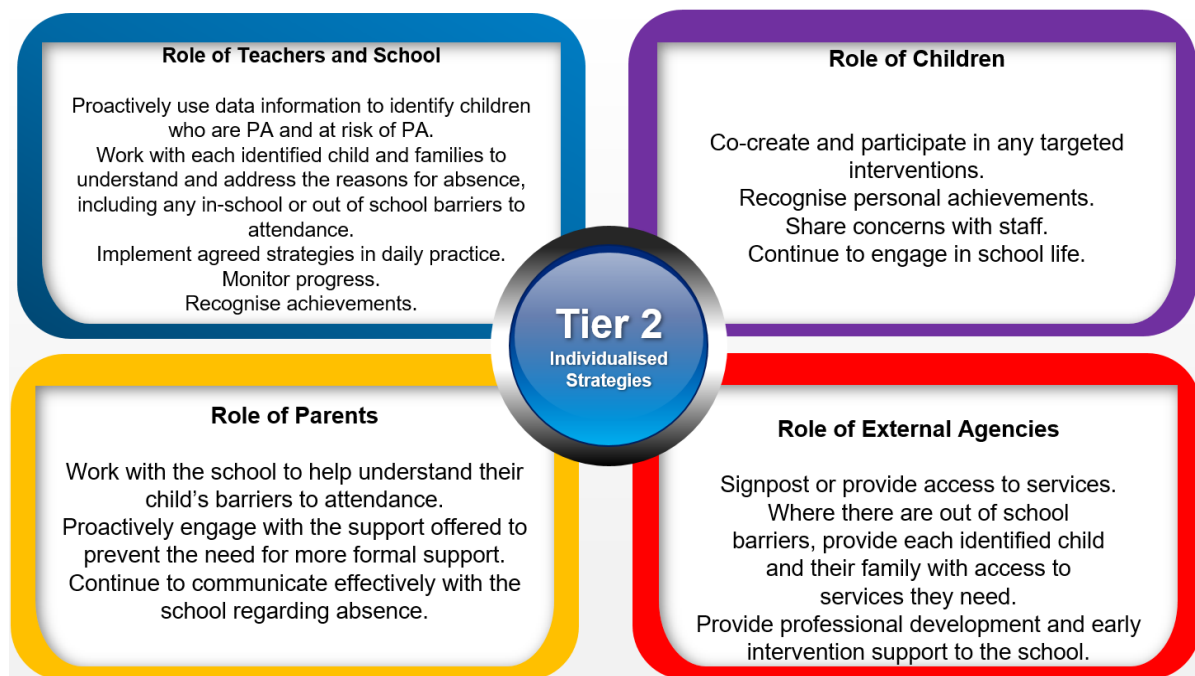
Discussions will include patterns of attendance/ trends of absence and supporting families in increasing their child's attendance. A 'Family and Child Attendance Support Plan' will be put into place to help to monitor, manage and support this. This may involve other agencies to provide support, guidance and education such as 0-19 team, Social Care/The Local Authority, Housing and Young Carers.

To manage attendance and punctuality, St Mark's will:

- Keep appropriate and accurate records: registers are taken in the morning and the afternoon. From the registers attendance data will be collated and shared with the head teacher, governing body and the DfE, this will help to inform the school, L.A. and DfE of trends in attendance and punctuality so we are able to effectively target attendance and punctuality in school.
- Monitor patterns of attendance: Teachers, SLT, Mrs Khan and the EWO will monitor children's attendance to support families whose children's attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Working Together: Meetings will be held by Mrs Khan and Mrs Sadler (School Attendance Champion and Headteacher) on a weekly basis to discuss the concerns around attendance. Data collated will support the school in targeting attendance improvements.

In the first instance, where attendance has identified as a cause of concern, initial communication will be made with parents/carers to discuss absences to identify and address any barriers that may be causing absences or lates. This will be reviewed as part of the Tier 2 process.

If the absence continues to fall, a letter of concern will be sent and a meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and /or Mrs Khan will be arranged, during this meeting we will discuss the previous support offered, make reasonable adjustments, if identified, to the individual strategy plan.



Tier 3 (Statutory Action)

If the issues have not been resolved and attendance continues to fall a Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued and may result in a referral to Education Welfare for statutory action.

Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-school week period.

These Absences can be late after register closes (U), Unauthorised Absences (O) and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences (G). They can also be a combination of any of the above.

Upon receipt of the referral to Education Welfare, the case will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer for statutory action. Attendance will be monitored weekly, as outlined in the policy, medical evidence and contact with the school will be scrutinised by the Education Welfare Officer.

Home visits, telephone calls, meetings and letters will be actioned. If attendance continues to be unauthorised a penalty notice fine will be issued.

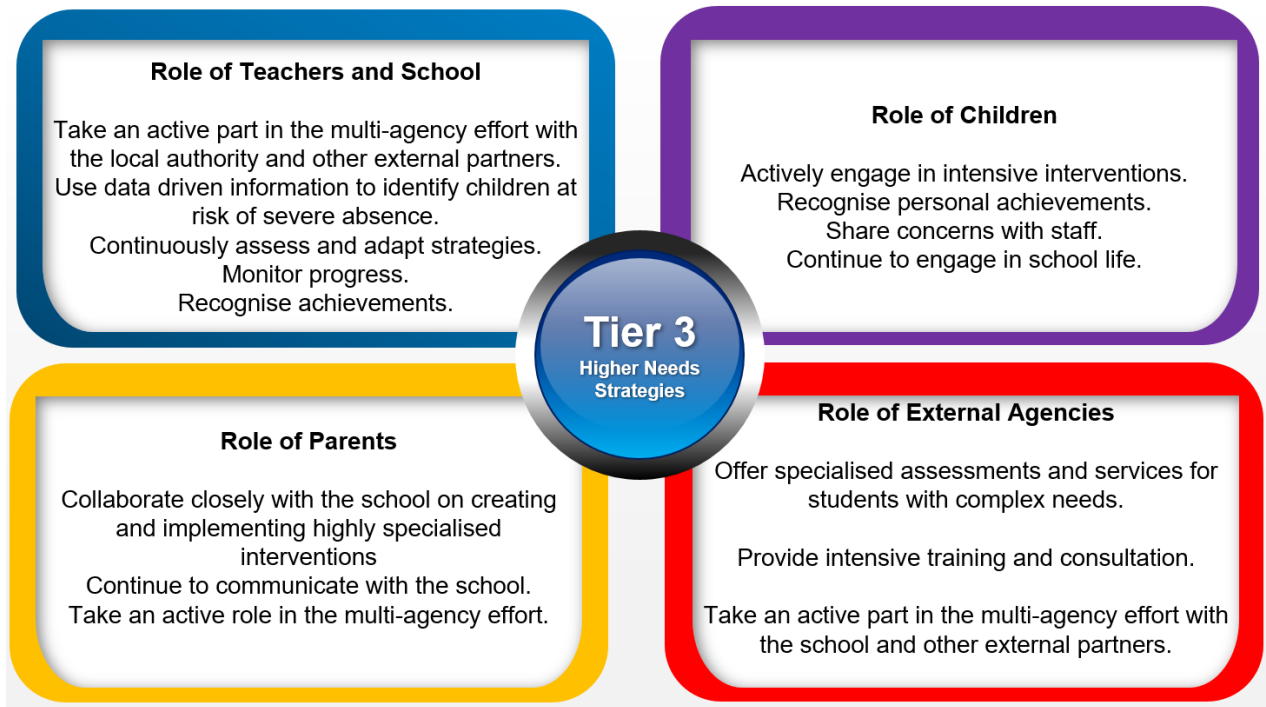
The parent/carer has 21 days to pay (£80 per parent, per child), if the fine is not paid after 21 days the fine will double to £160 per parent, per child unless not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the matter will proceed to court.

The matter would move to an Aggravated Statutory Offence (L4441(a)) if parents/carers have previous convictions for non-school attendance.

Upon receipt of the referral to Education Welfare, the case will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer for statutory action. Attendance will be monitored weekly, as outlined in the policy, medical evidence and contact with the school will be scrutinised by the Education Welfare Officer.

Home visits, telephone calls, meetings and letters will be actioned. If there is no improvement in attendance, an attendance review meeting is held with the Education Welfare Officer, the EWO manager, a representative from school and parents/carers. The case will proceed to court; this then carries a heavier fine, possible custodial sentence and it results in a criminal conviction.

Following 'Working together to improve school attendance' (19th August 2024) - where there are safeguarding concerns, St Mark's will intensify support through statutory children's social care when required.



SEND children

Children who have an additional need or Education Health Care Plan are expected to follow the attendance policy. We will work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. However, reasonable adjustments will be made for children who have medical needs and appointments. Advice from the school SENCos, pastoral team, attendance team and external agencies will be taken, shared and implemented when appropriate to support individuals and their attendance.

If you wish to discuss your child's attendance and medical needs, please call and arrange a meeting.

Any evidence of medical appointments/letters should be shared with the school to support your child's absences.

Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at St Mark's CE Primary School arrive on time, every day. An important part of our Attendance Policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly. In order to do this, we:

- Publish class attendance figures on a weekly basis in the school using class charts that are located in the school hall.
- Share attendance with families through our school newsletter.
- Send messages to parents via Dojo to celebrate positive attendance.
- Give a non-uniform day to the class with the highest attendance for the previous school week.
- Give a team point to each child, every morning, if they are in their classroom by 8:40am. The punctuality team points add up so that children can earn prizes at the end of each half term.
- Children with 100% attendance for the half term are entered into a raffle at the end of each half term, to win a £10 gift card, and all children entered into this raffle choose a prize from the prize box.
- Children with 100% attendance for the year are entered into a raffle at the end of each half term, to win a £50 gift card, and all children entered into this raffle receive a certificate and a trophy.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from our pupils is included in our home- school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to school.

Children missing in Education (CME)

This policy has been written in accordance to the guidance set out in the Stoke-on-Trent Council Promoting Regular School Attendance – Children Missing Education (CME) which can be on the school website.

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers at on the 5th day of absence day, St Mark's CE Primary School will begin the CME procedure as set down by The Local Authority's Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. On the 10th day a formal referral will be made to the L.A. CME team.

Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School

- Parents/Carers are required to update school if the family/child are moving to a new address, either by contacting the school via email or completing an update information form from the school office. This is to ensure the safeguarding of all children and the school's admission register is correct.
- If you wish to change school throughout the academic year you must complete an in-year transfer form which is available from any school office, this will then be signed by the current school's head teacher for you to return to the new school where you are applying.

Links to documents

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

[CME Policy on school website \(hyperlink\)](#)

Code \ (Present at the school):

- Pupils must be present during registration to be counted.
- If a pupil leaves after registration, they are still counted as attending for statistical purposes.

Code L (Late arrival before the register is closed):

- The pupil arrives after the register starts but before it closes.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a consistent time limit for open registration, not exceeding 30 minutes.
- If a pupil arrives late after the register closes, mark them as absent using code U or another appropriate absence code.

Code K (Attending education provision arranged by the local authority):

- Pupil attends educational provision arranged by the local authority, not by the school.
- Examples include attending courses at college or receiving home tutoring.
- Schools must record the nature of the provision and ensure notification of absences.

Code V (Attending an educational visit or trip):

- Pupil attends a school-arranged educational visit or trip supervised by school staff.
- Must take place during the recorded session.
- If pupil doesn't attend, record absence using relevant absence code.

Code P (Participating in a sporting activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational sporting activity.
- Criteria for recording attendance include approval by the school, educational nature of the activity, and appropriate supervision.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code W (Attending work experience):

- Pupil attends work experience as part of their education arranged by the local authority or school.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code B (Attending any other approved educational activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational activity other than sports or work experience.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must record the nature of the activity and ensure safeguarding measures.

Code D (Dual registered at another school):

- Used when a pupil is registered at more than one school, indicating absence with leave to attend the other school.
- Main examples include attendance at a pupil referral unit, hospital school, or special school temporarily.
- Schools must promptly follow up on unexpected or unexplained absences to avoid double counting.

Code C1 (Leave of absence for regulated performance or employment abroad):

- Schools grant leave for pupils to participate in regulated performances or employment abroad under specific circumstances.
- Criteria for granting leave include licenses issued by local authorities or exemptions.
- Schools must record the absence using this code and consider its impact on the pupil's education.

Code M (Leave of absence for medical or dental appointment):

- Schools encourage appointments outside of school hours; otherwise, prior agreement is necessary.
- Leave of absence is granted under specific conditions, including exceptional circumstances.
- Absences for medical or dental appointments are recorded using this code.

Code J (Leave of absence for interview for employment or admission):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to attend interviews for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- Applications for leave must be made in advance, and leave is granted based on specific criteria.
- The interview must occur during the recorded session, and the absence is classified as authorized.

Code S (Leave of absence for studying for a public examination):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to study for public examinations under specific conditions, agreed in advance with parents.
- Study leave should be granted sparingly, and provisions must be made for pupils who choose to continue attending school for revision.
- Absences for studying for public examinations are recorded using this code.

Code X (Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school):

- Schools can grant leave for non-compulsory school-age pupils to attend school part-time under certain circumstances.
- Absences for non-compulsory school-age pupils are recorded using this code, with exceptions noted.
- For pupils subject to a part-time timetable, this code should not be used, and appropriate absence codes should be applied.

Code C2 (Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable):

- Schools can grant leave for compulsory school-age pupils to temporarily reduce their timetable to part-time in exceptional circumstances, agreed upon with parents.
- Absences for pupils with part-time timetables are recorded using this code, ensuring agreement between the school and parents.

Code C (Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances):

- Schools may grant leave of absence at their discretion, but only for exceptional circumstances.
- Each application is assessed individually, considering specific facts and circumstances.
- Absences for exceptional circumstances are recorded using this code, ensuring compliance with regulations and discretion exercised by the school.

Code T (Parent traveling for occupational purposes):

- Used when a pupil's parent(s) is traveling for trade or business, and the pupil is traveling with them.
- Schools should only request proof of occupational travel when genuine doubt exists about the reason for absence.
- Pupils should ideally attend schools where their parents are traveling, being dual registered at both their main school and the one they're temporarily attending.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code R (Religious observance):

- Used when a pupil is absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by their religious body.
- Schools may seek guidance from the parent's religious body to ascertain such days.
- Strategies such as setting term dates around religious observance days are encouraged.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code I (Illness - not medical or dental appointment):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to illness, both physical and mental health related.
- Schools should not routinely request medical evidence but may do so when necessary.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code E (Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made):

- Used when a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision has been arranged.
- Alternative provision should be arranged within six consecutive school days of suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Classified as authorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code Q (Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to a failure by the local authority to provide access arrangements.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y1 (Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available):

- Used when a pupil can't attend because the school is beyond walking distance and the usual transport provided by the school or local authority is unavailable.
- Walking distances for different age groups are specified.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y2 (Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to widespread travel disruptions caused by emergencies at the local, national, or international level.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y3 (Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed):

- Used when part of the school premises is unusable, and the pupil cannot practically be accommodated in the remaining usable parts.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y4 (Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed):

- Applied when the entire school site is unexpectedly closed, such as due to adverse weather.
- Attendance registers are not taken, and pupils are marked with this code to signify the closure.
- Not applicable for planned closures like weekends or holidays.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y5 (Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention):

- Used when a pupil is unable to attend due to being in police detention, remanded, or serving a sentence of detention.
- Communication with the Youth Offending Team is encouraged to support educational needs during detention.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y6 (Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law):

- Applied when a pupil's travel or attendance at school would violate public health guidance or legislation related to disease transmission.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause):

- Used for an unavoidable cause preventing a pupil from attending school, not covered by other specific codes.
- The nature of the unavoidable cause must be recorded.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code G (Holiday not granted by the school):

- Used when a pupil is absent for a holiday that the school did not approve in advance.
- Schools cannot retrospectively grant leave of absence, and absence for holidays without prior approval is considered unauthorized.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code N (Reason for absence not yet established):

- Employed when the reason for a pupil's absence has not been determined before the register closes.
- Schools must make efforts to ascertain the reason for absence promptly.
- If the reason cannot be established within five school days, the absence must be amended to Code O.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code O (Absent in other or unknown circumstances):

- Used when no reason for absence is established, or the school is not satisfied with the reason given, which doesn't align with authorized codes.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Code U (Arrived in school after registration closed):

- Applied when a pupil arrives late after the register has closed but before the end of the session.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a specific time limit for registering attendance.
- Late arrival beyond the specified time results in the pupil being marked as absent.
- Classified as unauthorized absence for statistical purposes.

Administrative Code Z (Prospective pupil not on admission register):

- Utilized to set up registers in advance for prospective pupils who have not yet officially joined the school.
- Aims to streamline administrative processes.