

The Canterbury Academy Trust
Schools for all the Talents



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The Canterbury Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy Statement

Regular attendance at The Canterbury Primary School is essential for pupils to achieve their full potential. This policy sets out our commitment to promoting good attendance, preventing absences, and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.

Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Aims

The aim of the Attendance Policy is to encourage students of compulsory aged to attend school regularly (definition of regularly means every day the school is open in term-time. Striving for 100%) The Canterbury Primary School expects students to attend fully to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to students being disadvantaged. It can also place children at risk and in some instances result in patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

It is part of the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which lead to non-attendance. In pursuing this aim, we see the need to work closely with parents/guardians who are legally responsible for securing that their children attend school.

The Canterbury Primary School recognises the influence of the curriculum on promoting good attendance and maintains that its ethos and organisation also has a significant impact on student attendance. Coupled with effective following of process, will reduce significant numbers of persistent and severe absentees.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry should be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age.

Implementation of the Policy

The Canterbury Primary School will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions each day. **(Appendix 1)**
- The Trust sets annual attendance targets for both authorised and unauthorised absence, which will be reviewed, at least termly.
- Individual students and parents are given individual attendance targets where appropriate and progress towards achieving these targets will be reviewed as part of the initial review system.
- Parents are contacted on the first day of absence by the most appropriate means of communication.
- All medical appointments, where possible, should be made out of school time. The Canterbury Academy and The Canterbury Primary School will require evidence of medical appointments which must be shown to the appropriate attendance personnel.
- The use of a red, amber and green system identifies the process of interventions required for students and parents, which is implemented and closely monitored
- After 5 missed sessions of unauthorised absence parents are informed and penalty notice warning letter is sent. Any further absences will result in a meeting, being held between parents and pastoral staff. After 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice may be requested.
- Academy attendance statistics are reported to Directors at their regular meetings.
- Academy attendance statistics are published weekly.
- At The Canterbury Primary School and The Canterbury Academy the attendance teams across the trust work collaboratively together to track and monitor attendance and discuss siblings.
- A review system is in place to reward good and improved attendance.
- Vulnerable students with specific problems will be supported with regard to their attendance.
- Attendance over 97% at The Canterbury Primary School will be celebrated in tri-weekly 'Achievement' assemblies. The Canterbury Academy celebrates at termly assemblies.
- After 10 consecutive days of non-attendance without communication from home, The Canterbury Primary School will exhaust all methods of contact including home visits before completing a Child Missing Education (CME) Referral and submitting it to the Local Authority.

In Addition

The Canterbury Primary School uses a system of electronic registration monitored by the class teachers and school office. This enables the tracking of internal absence/truancy as students are registered during am and pm registration.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- 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

Staff

There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Pastoral Team have overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues. This is overseen by the Head of Inclusion and Head of School – **Appendix 3**.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of the day and the afternoon. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the pastoral of children whose attendance is causing concern – these are raised in the vulnerable groups meetings.

Pastoral team

It is the responsibility of the Pastoral team and school office to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up-to-date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or email.
- Where there has been no communication, a follow up call will be made. When there has been no response for the parent/guardian, a registration mark of 'O' is used.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (using National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed regularly of their child's attendance.
- Children Missing Education will be reported to the Local Authority following the Safeguarding Regulations.
- The Pastoral Team and School Liaison Officer (SLO) regularly meet for targeting support meetings.

Parents

Parents are required to:

- Report to the school office at The Canterbury Primary School if they arrive late and provide a reason for lateness.
- Inform the school office on the first day of non-attendance and all subsequent days of absence until the student returns to school. At The Canterbury Primary School calls must be made to the main school office using option line 2 to report absence. All absence must be reported by 9am.
- Inform the school office of any medical appointments and show evidence of this appointment.
- Discuss planned absences in advance. Any absence requested for exceptional circumstances should be applied for in writing with at least 2 weeks' notice, where possible. All written requests will be reviewed on an individual case by case basis and parents will be informed of the decision as to whether the absence will be authorised. The decision can only be made by the Head of School.
- During any unavoidable long-term absences, maintain regular contact (agreed with the school/Attendance officer) to assist with the support of the student and the provision of work.
- Ensure their child/children attend every day the school is open.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time and be punctual to all lessons.

Local Authority Action

The Canterbury Primary School will seek support of the Local Authority (LA) through the digital front door and a referral will be made if it is believed that all previous strategies/interventions have not helped improve a pupil's attendance. Examples of action that could be taken by the LA include:

- Attendance Improvement Meetings (pre-referral meetings)
- Home visits with specialist from the Trust
- Liaison with other agencies Children's Social Care/EarlyHelp
- Court action

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Unauthorised Absence

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. A penalty notice can be issued as a result of the following:

- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)
- Where a suspended child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of suspension.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has been absent for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 school days – these absences do not need to be consecutive.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/guardian of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Executive Principal's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head of School may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head of School, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each individual case will be judged on its merits and the Head of School’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. Failure to comply with a request for absence during term time will result in a Penalty Notice issued to Parents / guardians.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student’s previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head of School can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head of School can authorise absence and will use a consistent approach. The Head of School is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the school requesting a statutory attendance intervention from the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child’s Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed statutory intervention referral form with any other relevant information.

Children Missing Education

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.
- If school have not been provided with a new home address or new school for the child.

Children Missing Education procedure

From: DAY 1 of Absence	A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason of any absence is always required. If a child is absent and we have not received any notification, we will call parents/carers on the first day of absence. If the child is subject to a child protection plan or has complex needs, the procedures set out for day two unexplained absence will be implemented immediately.
From: DAY 2	If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, on the second day of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and other schools where siblings are known to attend and undertaking home visits. We will keep records of every attempt we have made to confirm the whereabouts and safety of the child. If we are able to confirm that the child is safe, we will arrange a home visit. If there is no response to the home visit, a letter will be hand delivered requesting contact and advising that, if necessary, liaison with the Police and Children's Services will be initiated. This action will be taken on day one if the child has complex needs or is subject to a child protection plan.
From: DAY 3	We will undertake another home visit. If there is no response, we will contact Children's Social Care and following their advice, we may also contact the police to request they undertake a welfare check.
From: DAY 10	We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days to the Attendance Advisory Practitioner and Child Missing Education Officer. Joint reasonable enquiries will be undertaken to locate the child. The school will write to parents advising of the possible removal from roll of the pupil following the twentieth day of unauthorised absence.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

The Canterbury Academy Trust will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be developed and implemented throughout the Trust.

Appendix 1

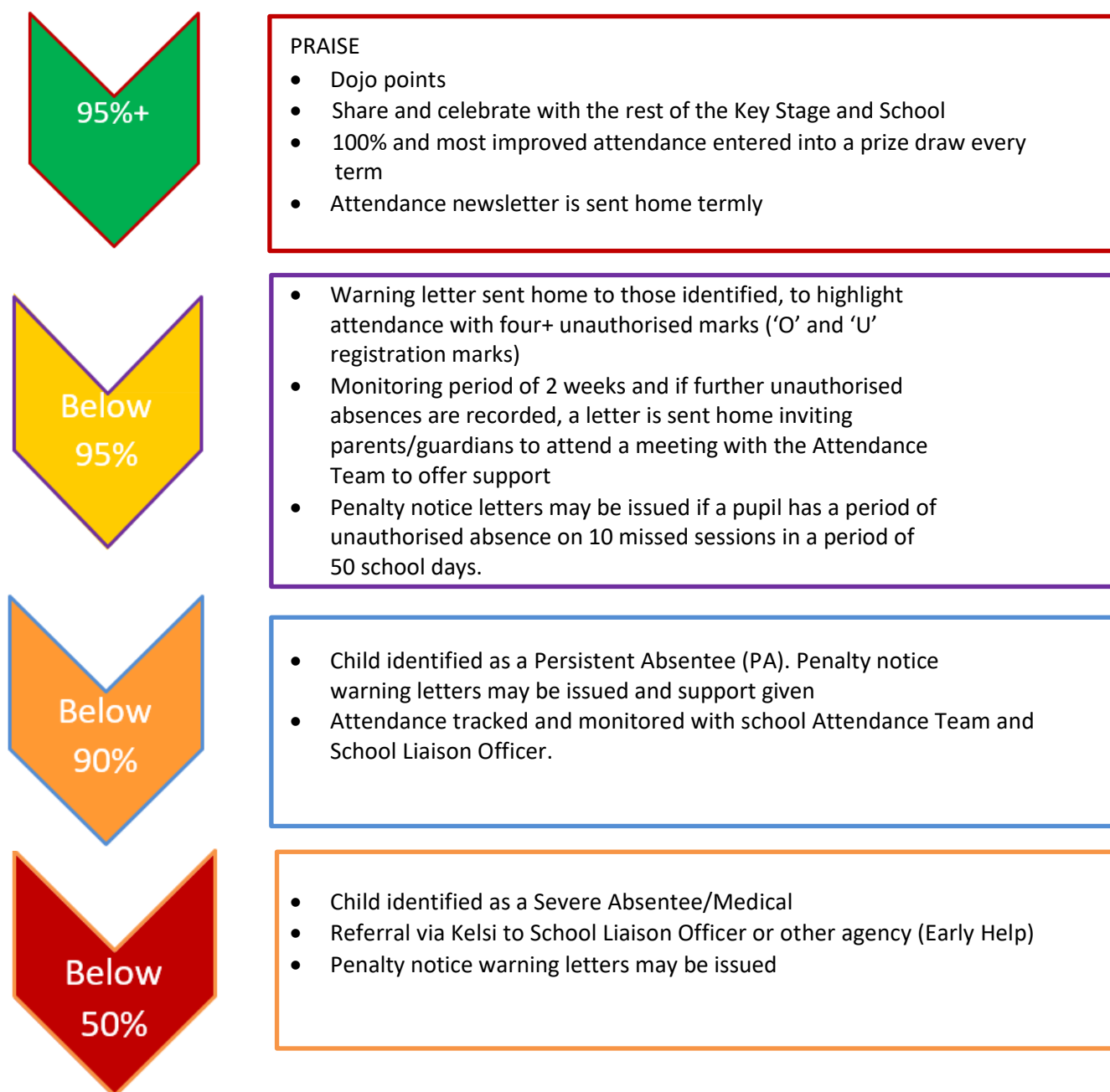
Morning Timings:

Year Group	Gates & Register open	Gates & Register close	Time – Late mark (Registration Code – L)	Time – Unauthorised mark (Registration Code – U)
FS (Reception)	8.30am	8.45am	8.46am - 9.00am	9.01am
KS1 (Years 1 & 2)	8.30am	8.45am	8.46am - 9.00am	9.01am
Lower KS2 (Years 3 & 4)	8.30am	8.45am	8.46am - 9.00am	9.01am
Upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6)	8.30am	8.45am	8.46am - 9.00am	9.01am

Afternoon Timings:

Year Group	Afternoon session commences	Register close	Time – Late mark
FS (Reception)	12.45pm	1.00pm	1.01pm
KS1 (Years 1)	12.45pm	1.00pm	1.01pm
KS1 (Years 2)	1.15pm	1.30pm	1.31pm
Lower KS2 (Years 3 & 4)	1.15pm	1.30pm	1.31pm
Upper KS2 (Years 5 & 6)	1.15pm	1.30pm	1.31pm

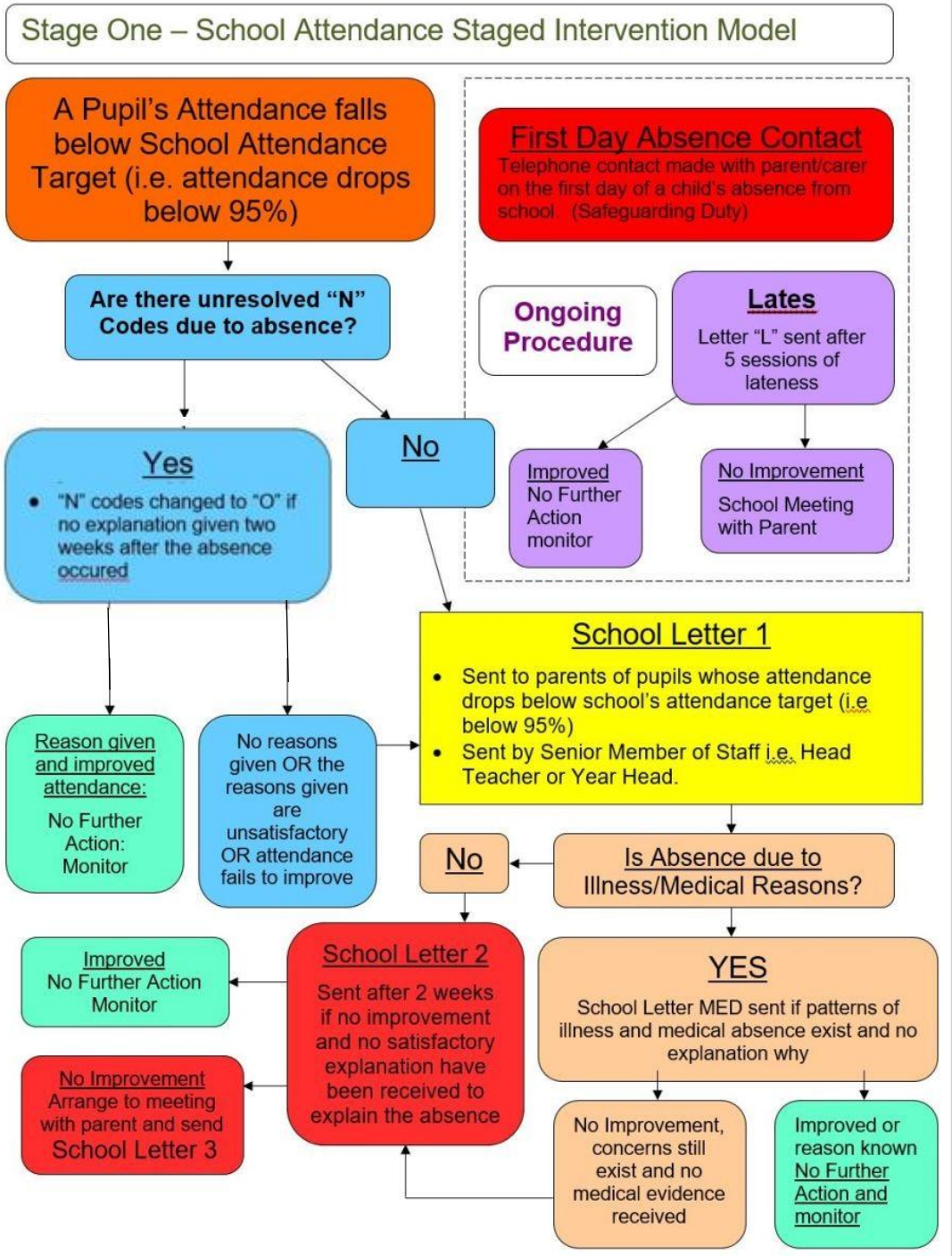
Appendix 2 – Attendance flowchart for the Primary School



Appendix 3 – Teacher’s responsibilities

Class Teacher’s responsibilities:

If you have a pupil who is arriving late or misses school on a regular basis, tackle this by having either a face-to-face meeting or a telephone conversation. Inform the pastoral team of the meeting outcome. This will be raised in our vulnerable groups meeting and further support will be offered where appropriate.



Appendix 4 – Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveler absence	Pupil from a traveler community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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