



Cotham School

Attendance Policy and Procedures 2022-23

Version control

The table below shows the history of the document and the changes made at each version:

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Updated by
1.0	September 2019		
1.1	September 2020	Inclusion of LEA Attendance Addendum	T Reed and C Reed
1.2	October 2020	Revised wording of section 4 Addition of section 5	D Leong
1.3	May 2023	Updated according to new local authority guidance issued in September 2022	O Knight

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Part 1 Policy:

1. Introduction

It is the aim of Cotham School that students should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of students and is an integral part of our school.

Some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by promoting good attendance; ensuring every student has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; to act early to address patterns of absence and create a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our students and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Parents should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence on the Attendance Line 0117 919 8019. If the school is concerned about a student's attendance for any reason we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our students to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our students to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realize their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school', therefore if an absence is

¹ Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

not authorised by the school, the student's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our students to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any student who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents [‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015’](#) and [‘Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013’](#)

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all students, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
- Raise our students awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Provide support , advice and guidelines to parents, staff and students
- Work in partnership with parents ,including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

Effects of Non-Attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days' absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is Approximately	Approximately number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 Days	4 weeks	100 lessons

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

We will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all students as part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a student's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) 2022 version or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases to the relevant

authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and /or the Police of the details of any student who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the students welfare.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2022 Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department of Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) 2007
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using Data to Support Improvements in Attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The DfE defines a student as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across a school year, for whatever reason. For students who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any student becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of students ; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance ; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6 Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance , we will ensure all students and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider well being and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a student or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support students and parents by working together to address any in school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of school's control, all partners should work together to support students and parents to access any support they may

need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the Local Authority and other relevant partners. Some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these students face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support students to reintegrate back into education to access full time provision.

The school is committed to sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard students. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances;
- The law and the requirements of schools including the keeping of registers;
- The schools strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance;
- And the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to students who need it.

For staff with the specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- The necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data;
- And any additional training that would be beneficial to support students and student cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part 2 What the Law says and Our School Procedure:

1. Contents of the Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the school must record if the students is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management information system to record attendance.

2. Present at School (and Lateness)

Students are marked present if they are in the tutor room when the register is taken. If a student leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

- Students must arrive by 8.25am each school day
- Our register is taken 8.30am and is kept open until 9.30am
- Our afternoon register is taken during Period 4a
- Students who arrives after 8.30 am will be marked as Late (L) which counts as a present mark

If a student arrives after the register has closed (9.30am), they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code ' Late after register closes (U). This is an unauthorised absence mark for the AM session . However, if a student arrives late due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly on production of an appointment card / text. In line with Local Authority guidelines the reasons for lates of traffic or travel delays cannot be accepted for persistent absence if the parent has chosen to travel to Cotham School rather than a more local school. See DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a student arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, tutor time, teacher instructions and introductions. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in One Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 days	30 lessons
15 mins	9 days	45 lessons

3. Authorised Absence

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

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows the [Working together to Improve School Attendance](#) which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from the GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the student's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual student

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a student has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case the school will make the parent aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

Absences should be reported by email to the attendance absence email at absence@cotham.bristol.sch.uk or by telephone on 0117 919 8000. Parents should leave, the child's name, tutor group, reason for absence and expected date of return

If the child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available. Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Students Taken Ill During the Day

If a student needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances the student must be

collected from Student Reception by a parent or other authorised adult and sign out. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

3.2. Medical / Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a student must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from student reception by the parent or another authorised adult and sign out. No student will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation. Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or copy of the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

3.3. Religious Observation

Our school acknowledges the multi faith nature of our community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of the school holiday or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observation by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

3.4. Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller student of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded in the register.

3.5. Suspensions

If the school decides to send a student home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a Suspension. The school will follow the current [Dfe Statutory Guidance on School Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions](#).

The suspension must be agreed by the Headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of a suspension in writing. If the student is a Child in Care, the school will notify the student's carer, social worker and the Hope Virtual School. In other instances, where a student is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

No student will be allowed to leave the site without parental confirmation.

4. First Day of Absence Response

The school will attempt to contact by text the parent of any child who is absent from morning registration without a reason having been supplied to the school. Parents must ensure that the school has contact details of at least three people who can be contacted in an emergency, it is also the parents' responsibility to keep these numbers updated.

If the school does not receive contact from a parent in response to the first day absence text, we will follow up with a phone call and/or email. If the school is still unable to make contact with the parent, and we are concerned for the child, we may request a Welfare Check from the police or conduct a home visit.

5. Students on School Site but Missing from their Timetabled Lesson

Teachers will send an email to a dedicated email address if they notice that a student is not in their classroom but has been marked present as on-site at any time during that day. When they do, the Duty Teacher will then check the lists of students undertaking intervention sessions, music lessons, meetings with any pastoral staff, any on-site events or the Safe Space in the SEND area to see if the student is there. If they are not, the SEND Administrator will then radio and email the Duty Teacher to request that they look for the student by checking student toilets and other common areas. If still unable to locate the student, CCTV will be looked at to trace the student's last known movements in school to see if they have managed to get off-site. At that point, parents will be called by the attendance team. Should the parent or school continue to be unable to locate the student, the school reserves the right to contact the police, particularly in the case of vulnerable students who are open to social care involvement.

6. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

We reward students for good or improved attendance by group and individually.

7. Leave of Absence Requests – Exceptional Circumstances

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request, whilst considering a consistent approach across the school. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child lives and this must be done in advance of the absence. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Written evidence of exceptional circumstances will be required, if flights are booked in an emergency the school will need confirmation of the date the flights were booked.

Parents should complete a leave of absence form which is available on the school website

or from the Attendance Office. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated: and wherever possible at least **four weeks** before the absence. . If the request is not made to the school before the absence is taken, the school will not authorise an absence retrospectively. Although such absence may be unauthorised it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.

If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols in line with our Safeguarding policies.

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The Hope Virtual School . This permission should be gained before the school is approached for approval . The school will contact the Hope Virtual School in relation to any requests for a child in care.

8. Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a student is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absence, it is the schools decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at school after the register closes
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for deliveries / repairs
- Day Trips
- Long Weekends and Holiday in term time
- If a student is kept away from school longer than was agreed

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecution.

9. Approved Educational Activity (AEA)

When students are attending educational activities off the school site that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a student is attending an alternative education providers such as another school or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the student to be dual registered and mark our registers accordingly.

If a student is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or PRU , for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions in which the student attends the alternative setting as code B (off site educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual students, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP.

10. Unable to Attend due to Exceptional Circumstances (as set out in the law and DfE guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record students as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (these are not recorded as absences)

- Our school site , or part of it is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- A national or local emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the child from attending school and the students home is not within statutory walking distance (see [Home to School Travel and Transport](#))
- The student is in custody , but still on the school roll

11. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes students can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and students to be honest and open with us about the reasons for a student's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school we need to understand the reasons why a student is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support students in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a student, we will do our best to make the parents aware of these concerns and give them an opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions.

If a student's attendance falls below 90% a referral may be made to Education Welfare Services South West. If our school refers a poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parents that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by school or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a child who is absent we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

12. Students on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Students are entitled to a full time education, suitable for their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If for any reason our school is unable to provide a student with a full time education due to

the student's needs, we will work with the student, parents and other agencies to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetable will be for the shortest time possible, and only whilst arrangements are made to support the students return to a full time timetable.

13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parents(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to their Local Authority for legal action, unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken in term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a student's irregular attendance.

A student's unauthorised absence from school could result in the following:

- A Penalty Notice. The Penalty is £60 payable within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.)
- Prosecution

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment (see [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#) and Bristol City Council's Penalty Code of Conduct, available here

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business/schools-learning-and-early-years-for-professionals/attendance-and-inclusion/education-welfare-service>

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Schools and Local Authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range

of legal interventions rather than relying solely on Penalty Notices. These are parenting contracts/ Education Supervision Orders/ Attendance Prosecution/ Parenting Orders

14. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delate students from roll in line with the law. The school follow [Bristol City Council Children Missing Education Guidance](#) and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about individual cases childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk

15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school, the school will contact parents on the first day of absence. If the child returns to school and still no explanation has been given a letter is sent to the home address. If we establish a reason for absence it will be marked accordingly. If there is no response to the letter the absence will remain unauthorised and marked with the code O.

If we are concerned about a students absence and are unable to contact the parent , we may contact the students emergency contacts and other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to help us locate the child

16. Attendance Reporting to Parents

Attendance will be included on your child's reports. Where a child's attendance falls below 94% a letter is sent to advise the parents of our concerns.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons

All reasons given by parents are recorded on SIMS.

18. Attendance and School Visits

In order that a student is eligible to attend an offsite extra-curricular visit or trip there is an expectation that a student's attendance will be 95% or above to be considered for a place.

Students will not be invited to participate in a trip if their attendance is less than 95% unless the trip must be attended in line with compulsory curriculum examination and coursework requirements. Having already missed significant amounts of classroom teaching through absence (authorised or unauthorised) it is important that they do not miss more.

Students with ongoing health issues whose attendance is below 95% will be able to access extra-curricular offsite trips and visits subject to the receipt of supporting medical evidence.

Appendix A

Contents of Attendance Register

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent;
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances; or, Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)¹¹

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and, Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Boarding Schools

Boarding schools without day-pupils are not required to keep an attendance register. Schools with a mixture of day-pupils and boarders must keep an attendance register for the day-pupils.

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

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

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

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

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

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

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

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

Code B: Off-Site Educational Activity

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

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.

Not Attending in Circumstances Relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X.

Code X: Not Attending in Circumstances Relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- Guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care or
- Any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- And their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there.

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

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.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

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

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

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

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

Code Z: Pupil Not on Admission Register

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

Code #: Planned Whole or Partial School Closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned 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.