



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1	Spring 2022	Updated Policy
2	Summer 2023	Updated to included criteria applied when issuing EPNs.

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'Every Day Counts'

Whitchurch Primary School & Nursery recognises that punctual and regular school attendance are central to raising standards in education and contributes significantly to pupil's progress. Absence from lessons can result in children falling behind in their learning and may also put their safety at risk. Children with regular poor attendance are vulnerable and more likely to underachieve in both primary and secondary school.

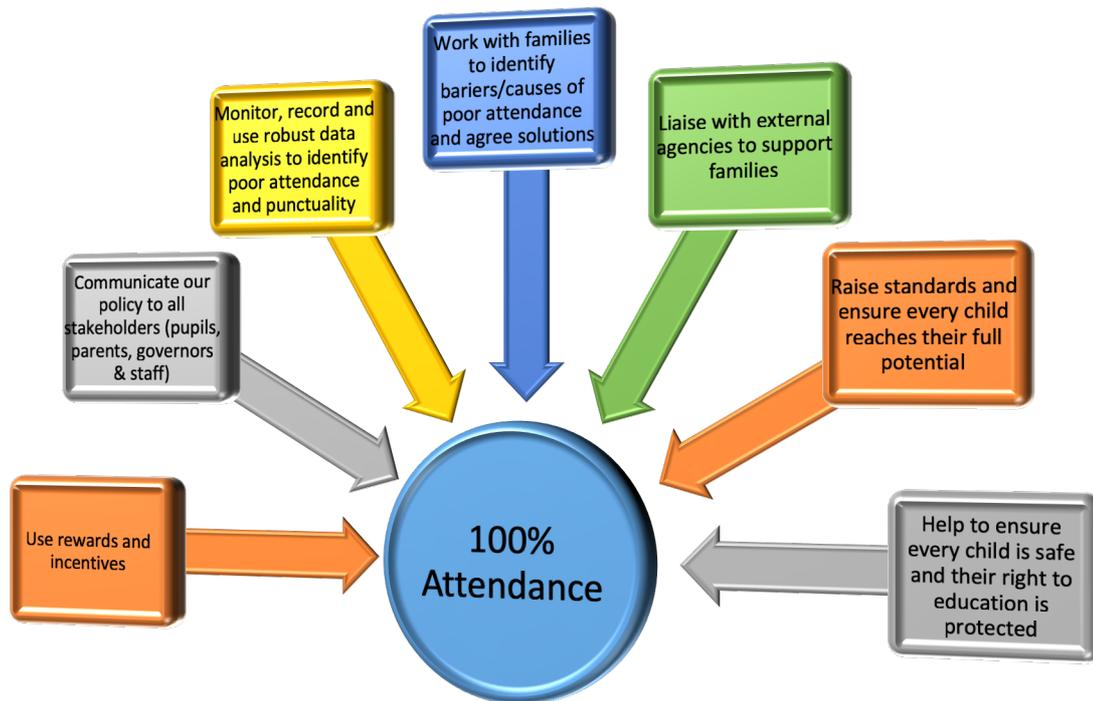
Whitchurch Primary School & Nursery promotes 100% school attendance and punctuality for every child. We are committed to equal opportunities and we support pupils and their families in achieving this goal. We want all our pupils and their families to feel valued and welcome.

The SLT, AAO and family liaison officer will use every opportunity to convey to pupils and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and an essential component of our safeguarding practice.

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy reflects our statutory responsibilities.

1. Aims



We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

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

There are legal obligations on:

- I. The parents/carers to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.
- II. The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
- III. The Local Authority to provide education and enforce attendance.
- IV. The Government, who expects schools and local authorities to:
 - Reduce absence, including persistent absence
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act early to address patterns of absence
 - Ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age are registered at school and are punctual
 - Ensure all pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly

2.1 Legal enforcement by the Department of Education (DfE) and the Local Authority (Harrow)

Term-time holiday:

From September 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days for authorised absences. The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Harrow Local Authority has set up the **Attendance Intervention Model (AIM)** for all Harrow schools and will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (**Section 443 of the Education Act 1996**) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (**Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**).

In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence. These may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The Harrow Attendance Guidance and Resources (pack) provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action, which is called **Attendance Intervention Model (AIM)**.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Dealing with difficult issues on attendance, highlighted by the Assistant Head teacher for Inclusion & Safeguarding
- dealing with parental requests for extended leave in line with London Borough of Harrow
- considering the use of Penalty Notices, in line with *Attendance Intervention Model (AIM)*
- Liaising with external agencies and making referrals where necessary.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 Assistant Head teachers are responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and punctuality on a daily basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries
- Meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and Admissions and Attendance Officer (AAO) to monitor systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used
- Revising and amending the policy as required with SLT

3.4 Sims Administrator for Attendance (Receptionist) and Admissions & Attendance Officer (AAO) are responsible for:

- Conducting and recording the outcome of first day calls when a child does not arrive at school and when no reason has been received
- Sending out text messages to parents who have not reported their child absent by 10.00am each day. This is followed up by a phone call, if no reply is received by 11.00am. If there is no information about the child's whereabouts by 11am the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Headteacher) is notified.
- Monitoring weekly attendance data for all Year groups
- Checking the school's answer phone and taking messages from parents/carers about a pupil's absence
- Informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Headteacher) of any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- Producing weekly/termly/yearly data for AHTs/DHT/HT/GB to analyse.
- Recording reasons for absence and updating class registers
- Implementing the daily checking of electronic registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions
- Maintaining SIMS attendance records in line with this policy
- Liaising with and reporting to external agencies as and when appropriate
- Reporting to the LBH, as requested

- Maintaining clear communication channels with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality within their Year groups
- Overseeing the admission and induction of new pupils
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Headteacher) with the promotion of excellent attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy
- Reminding parents/carers of school procedures when parents have not complied
- Advises the Deputy Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring first quality teaching everyday, with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs
- Completing the daily class attendance and punctuality register with the pupils
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through SIMS
- Taking a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This should be done on SIMS or on a paper record when SIMS is not available
- Reminding children and parents about the importance of good attendance
- Following up on pupils' absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought and plausible
- Providing a safe and welcoming environment which encourages attendance and promotes pupils' well-being
- Establishing effective communication links with parents/carers and working collaboratively to meet the child's needs. If required, to work with external agencies/professionals to assist them in fulfilling all statutory duties (for example, child protection, identifying barriers to good attendance etc.)
- Reporting poor or persistent absences to the delegated AHT or Deputy Headteacher
- Reporting pupil attendance and punctuality to parents/carers at parent consultation meetings and formally in termly school reports.

3.6 Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time whenever possible
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of their child's absence
- Provide a written explanation of absence electronically and handwritten explanations are accepted, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child. This includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in their child's life that may have an impact on their learning or well-being

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.05am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm for Reception and Years One to Four and will be kept open until 1.15pm. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.30pm for Years Five and Six and will be kept open until 1.45pm

Nursery: the register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm and will be kept open until 12.45pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes/Action
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents/carers	

Parents inform the school by 8.45am if their child is absent on that day	Parents/carers	SIMs Administrator (SA) update registration codes
Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception	SA /reception staff	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark by SA
Class teachers record attendance using SIMS at: Nursery: 8.30 and 12.30 Reception, Years 1-4: 8.45am and 1.00pm Years 5-6: 8.45am and 1.30pm Completed registers must be sent to the office by 9.05am and 1.30pm	Class teachers/TAs or Supply staff	A paper register is used if SIMS is not available CTs take responsibility for informing SA/AHT (Inclusion & Safeguarding) of any concerns
1 st day of absence: in the absence of a note, email or phone call from the parent: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10.00am – text message sent out to all parents whose child has an unexplained absence• 10.30am – phone call made to any parents who have not responded to the text message.• 11.00am – DSL to be informed of any remaining unexplained absences.• DSL to try all contacts on record.• If unable to make contact, DSL to email parents regarding safeguarding concern.• 1.30pm – if there is still no contact by parents, DSL + one other member of staff to carry out a home visit if required.• 2.00pm – The situation is escalated to the head Teacher where the decision may be made to contact the police.	SA DSL	SA updates attendance codes.
On occasions a written note may be provided by Parents, which should include dates and reason for absence upon the child's return to school.	Parents/carers	These are collected and filed by SA

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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

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

4.3 Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Absence notes

Parents are expected to write to the class teacher and explain the reason for their child's absence. Notes received from parents explaining absence is kept for the remainder of the academic year. Parents can also use the space provided in their child's diary and/or home-school link book. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. Where a child is absent due to medical reasons for a period of 5 days or more, the school requires the parent to provide medical evidence for the extended period of absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

The AAO and SLT monitor lateness of pupils as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The gates open at 8.40 a.m. for all year groups and close at 9:00am so there is a window of 15 minutes where the children can come into school.

Covid 19: Following current government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance#attendance>. School attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age and it is a priority to ensure that as many children as possible regularly attend school. The registers are completed as the children come into class and close 5 minutes after the gates are closed.

The school day starts after the gates close at 9:00 a.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after these times will be recorded as late to school (L code). The Registers close at 8.45am (Nursery) and 9.30am (Reception to Year Six) and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The Afternoon begins at 12.30pm for Nursery, 1:00 pm for Reception and Years 1 to 4, and 1.30pm for Years Five and Six. Pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 12.45pm (Nursery) 1:15pm (Reception to Year 4). and 1:45 pm (Years Five and Six) respectively. After this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will write to the parents/carers about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to Harrow Attendance Services.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by following the daily procedures outlined in the table shown in 4.2 of this policy.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

School will report to parents/carers attendance summaries as part of each pupil's annual school report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1. Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are not authorised. Parents/carers who wish to take their child out of school during term time for any reason other than illness or medical appointment, must complete an **Exceptional Leave of Absence** request in advance. This request can be authorised **ONLY** by the Deputy Headteacher. Only requests that the Deputy Headteacher deems as exceptional circumstances and backed up by relevant supporting evidence, will be authorised. Parents/carers who take their child out of school during term time without authorisation may receive an EPN (Education Penalty Notice) from the Local Authority.

5.2 Approval for term-time absence

The Deputy Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Deputy Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. In line with local authority guidance, pupil absences of up to a maximum of 3 days per academic year may be authorised for religious observances.

Parents/carers must apply for this leave in advance of the religious occasion using the appropriate leave of absence form.

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The school follows set procedures (see table below) to track and monitor attendance and ensure consistency with how attendance is analysed and addressed where there are concerns with a pupil's attendance.

Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes/action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced to provide an overview of all pupils' attendance	AAO	Data entered into Attendance Overview for monitoring and analysis
Attendance data shared in assembly and in the school newsletter	AAO and DHT	Parents are able to monitor attendance by classes
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated to show reasons for absence	SA & AAO	Information provided here can be used to inform targeted interventions if appropriate
Half Termly & Termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes/action
Analyse attendance and punctuality data to identify trends and monitor progress against target	AAO, family liaison officer, AHTs & DHT	Identify pupils that require either support or a meeting with a member of staff to discuss their child's attendance
Attendance/punctuality assembly included within star/celebration assemblies	DHT	Promote good attendance and celebrate pupils with excellent attendance
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	YTLs & SLT	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	YTLs & SLT	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate

<p>Intervention for persistent low attendance</p> <p>At the end of each half term, the parents of children whose attendance has dropped below 96% will be sent a letter by the family liaison officer and a copy emailed to DSL, AAO (Attendance and Admissions Officer).</p> <p>If attendance falls below 90% a meeting should be arranged with a member of SLT</p> <p>Where persistent attendance continues to remain below 90% and an attendance meeting has already been held during the academic year, an additional meeting should be set up on this occasion with the Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher. Parents will also be informed at this meeting that the school will also require documentary medical evidence to support any future absences due to illness. A letter will be given which outlines the above.</p> <p>If attendance continues to fall and is below 90%, the DHT contacts School Attendance Liaison and Elective Home Education Officer for involvement and advice.</p> <p>Class teachers and AHTs should raise attendance concerns with parents at parent teacher consultation meetings - a list should be sent by the Admissions & Attendance Administrator to class teachers prior to parents' evenings.</p>	<p>YTL & family liaison officer to send letter home.</p> <p>AAO & SLT to arrange meeting.</p> <p>AAO/DH/HT to arrange meeting.</p> <p>AAO & DHT</p> <p>AAO & DHT AHT/CT</p>	<p>Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families. Letter includes reference to an EPN, should persistent unauthorised absences continue.</p> <p>Targeted intervention for individual concerns</p> <p>AAO/DH/HT to arrange meeting. Medical evidence letter to be passed to parents.</p> <p>Headteacher to be informed.</p> <p>DHT to inform SLT and AAO of the advice given. DHT to act on advice given.</p>
<p>Intervention for unauthorised absences or authorised absences, which continue into unauthorised absences.</p> <p>Should unauthorised absences continue</p>		

<p>absenteeism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flight ticket confirmation if the reason for absenteeism be due to delayed flights. <p>This letter also informs parents that without such evidence an EPN will be issued.</p>		<p>Action EPN should no evidence become available from parents.</p>
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5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5.4 Children Missing in Education (CME)

In line with Local Authority Guidance, Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery will monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. We will inform the local authority the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if Whitchurch Primary & Nursery does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. For further information please click on the link below.

[Children Missing in Education September 2016](#)

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school believes that by promoting good attendance frequently we will highlight its importance and achieve our target. There is at least one termly formal whole-school assembly, with year groups using additional presentations during the year to promote good attendance.

Our attendance policy is discussed with families at parents' coffee mornings and consultation evenings held in the autumn and spring terms. Reminders about attendance are featured in school newsletters.

Pupils are rewarded termly for 100% attendance.

7. Attendance Monitoring

The school will set attendance targets each year. The target for attendance in the academic year 2021-2022 is 96%.

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence falls below 96%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum at least every two years by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher and the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The School uses a computerised system (SIMS) for keeping the school attendance records. The following National codes are used to record attendance information. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
*	Unavailable from September	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

SA	SIMS Administrator - for Attendance
AAO	Admissions & Attendance Officer
CT	Class Teacher
HT	Headteacher
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
AHT	Assistant Headteacher
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
YTL	Year Team Leader
EPN	Education Penalty Notice
SIMS	School Information Management System