

# Attendance Officers Guide



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

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# Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Meet the team	Page 4
How we support schools	Page 4
Monthly returns	Page 4
Referrals	Page 5
Poor attendance (Persistent Absentees)	Page 5
Attendance flow chart guide for schools	Page 5
Holiday penalty notices	Page 8
Children missing education	Page 9
Elective home education	Page 9
Exclusions	Page 11
Post 16	Page 12
September guarantee collection	Page 12
Destination survey	Page 12
NEET support	Page 12
Other services	Page 13
Home visits	Page 13
Assemblies	Page 13
School's meetings with families	Page 13

Appendices	Page 14
Appendix A Attendance template first letter	Page 15
Appendix B Attendance template second letter	Page 16
Appendix C Attendance template third letter	Page 17
Appendix D Exceptional leave template letter	Page 18
Appendix E Unauthorised exceptional leave (Holiday) penalty notice request checklist	Page 19
Appendix F Children missing education checklist	Page 21
Appendix G COVID Attendance coding	Page 22
Appendix H Checklist for behaviour and attendance	Page 23

# Introduction

The Participation Team advises schools, professionals, parents, children and young people of statutory school age on school attendance and takes actions to support. The team also has the responsibility to track young people aged 16 to 19 to establish if they are accessing Education, Employment or Training (EET) and those that are found to be Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) offered support and access to an appropriate provision. London Borough of Hillingdon also has a statutory duty to track statutory school age children and ensure they have a suitable education provision in place. This is overseen by the Children Missing Education Team.

## Contact details:

01895 250 858

[participationteam@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:participationteam@hillingdon.gov.uk) This is the main email for parents/schools/local authorities to contact when requesting information or support. This is the inbox the Duty Officer accesses daily.

[childrenmissingeducation@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@hillingdon.gov.uk) This is a dedicated inbox for matters relating to Children Missing Education.

[eetinfo@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:eetinfo@hillingdon.gov.uk) This inbox is for Post-16 enquiries and tracking. Young people can access support through this inbox.

## Meet the team

The team consists of Two Team Leaders, a MASH/Duty Officer, Participation Officers and Tracking Officers (Post 16 & Children Missing Education).

For further information please visit LEAP and see the [meet the team](#) page for the most up to date team information.

## How we support schools

The Participation Team will support schools in providing statutory support for Children Missing Education and Legal Action (Penalty Notices and Court cases) for non-attendance. Academies and Free Schools can purchase a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to commission the Participation Teams services such as support and advice, attendance at meetings and holding Attendance Panels. This service is available for maintained schools.

## Monthly Returns

All schools are required to provide the Participation Team with the submission of a Monthly Return by 7th of every month (except August) complete with data from the start of the academic to the last day in the previous month. Data is collated and enables the identification of children and young people who are not in receipt of full-time education and are persistent absentees, as well as those that have been added to the school roll and removed from roll. This document is used to agree and discuss appropriate actions with the school.

Please find link to [Monthly Return Help Sheet](#). Guidance on how to run the report from SIMS is also available in this document.

The Participation Team offers training to schools regarding expectations of registration procedures. We are happy to lead assemblies or speak to parents at school induction/open meetings and advise on current expectations for attendance. Whilst we are operating within Covid-19 restrictions, virtual meetings may sometimes be necessary.

## Referrals

On all occasions school must have engaged with the families face to face, over the phone, email, or by letter. Schools should have tried to intervene and put in different strategies to help the pupil's attendance to improve. If all resources have been exhausted, please refer to the Participation Service using the [on-line referral form](#) via the Stronger Families Hub. Once we receive the referral, we need to assess the details provided and advise school if there are more actions they should consider.

## Poor Attendance (Persistent Absentees)

A pupil becomes a Persistent Absentee (PA) when their attendance is 90% or less. The registration certificate are to show unauthorised absences (O, U, G) in order for us to intervene. School should have also contacted parents via email, letter, phone, text or face to face meetings. All interventions described must have been exhausted before a referral is made. Examples of attendance letters can be found in the appendix from page 14.

## Attendance Flowchart Guide for Schools

Schools and the Local Authority should seek to understand, reassure and assist families that are struggling to return due to trauma, fears and financial impact of the COVID-19 and periods of lockdown. Communications with families should specifically address the schools concern and seek the response of the parents in a supportive manner, in order to encourage discussion and offer solutions. Following the wider opening of schools it is vital for *all* children to return to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

If you are clear that the above has been considered:

**Pupil's attendance falls below 96% a letter needs to be sent out to parents.**

*Letter should contain the concern you have with regards to attendance.*

**"1<sup>st</sup> Letter "**



If attendance continues to decline, then proceed to the next step.

**Child's attendance falls between 92% to 90% a letter needs to be sent out to parents requesting a meeting.**

*The parents are invited to the meeting to speak about any issues the family may be experiencing. All absences from now will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.*

**"2<sup>nd</sup> Letter"**



Please ensure you have made the following interventions: telephone calls to parents, truancy calls and attempt to hold meetings. Do not authorise absences without medical evidence or valid reason that the Head Teacher is satisfied with.

**Child's attendance falls below 90% a letter needs to be sent out to parents informing them that they will now be referred to the Participation Team.**

**'3<sup>rd</sup> Letter'**

*If there is no improvement, and the child's attendance falls below 90%, then you can refer it to us where we will take action.*



**Refer to the Participation Team**

A Participation Officer will then discuss your referral with you and advise the next steps. An Attendance Warning Letter will be sent to the parent(s)/carer informing of our involvement, and that the local authority is monitoring their child's attendance. This case will then be reviewed with you and if an improvement is made, no further action will take place. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance and there are further unauthorised absences, the case may move to an Attendance Panel. In some circumstances where attendance has already fallen below 70% a decision may be made by the Officer to proceed to an Attendance Panel without a warning letter being sent.

The Attendance Panel will be held with the school, the Participation Officer and the parent. We ask that secondary school age pupils are also present at the meeting and primary school age pupils complete the [‘My school and me’ document](#) to capture their views. If a pupil is in year six and is an independent traveller, they can also be invited to the Attendance Panel.

Please make the Participation Officer aware of any professionals currently working with the family or that are relevant, such as Children’s Social Care, CAMHS, YOS, Police, Young Carers etc so that these professionals can be invited to the Panel meeting. The meeting will be chaired by the Participation Officer. An agreement will be made and signed by all attendees. A review date, usually 4 weeks will be set. It will be made clear to the parent(s)/carers and all parties at the Panel meeting that all evidence sourced during this period is to be sent to the Participation Officer in addition to the school.

Copies of the agreement from the Panel meeting will be shared with all attendees. If the parent/carers do not attend this meeting and give no notice of their absence, the meeting will go ahead in their absence. A home visit, where possible, will be made after the Panel meeting to attempt contact with the parent/carers and deliver the panel agreement.

On the review date, an up-to-date registration certificate will be assessed by the Participation Officer. If there are less than 6 unauthorised absences during the review period, then the case will be closed, and a closure letter sent to the parent(s)/carers and a copy to the school.

If it is deemed that during the period of the Panel and the review date, that the pupil has not attended regularly (determine by the pupil having 6 or more unauthorised sessions) then further action will be taken.

If the case is progressed, a Penalty Notice will be issued or Court action initiated. The Participation Officer will send the Penalty Notice to the family home. Parents will have a maximum of 28 days to make payment. The Participation service will serve all court documents to the family home. Should the family change address, please make the service aware.

Once payment is made the case will be closed. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid the Participation Officer will write a Statement of Witness and gather all evidence to exhibit as the matter progresses to Court. Please be aware that you, or a member of staff from your school, may be called as a witness.

The Participation Officer will remain in contact with you throughout this process and will send copies of all letters and paperwork to you for your records. Please also ensure you inform the Participation Officer of any updates regarding the case that you have throughout the process.

All staff, governors and trustees should understand the importance of good behaviour and attendance and have a good understanding of the school's policies. This may include having an attendance and/or behaviour lead on the senior leadership team to ensure policies are implemented effectively and on the governing body to provide additional visibility, support and challenge.

## **Exceptional Leave/ Holiday Penalty Notice**

If a parent requests leave from school during term time, school must send a letter to the parent(s) immediately before the leave is taken informing that the leave request has not been granted and any days taken off due to the leave will be unauthorised.

If parent(s) do not notify the school prior to taking unauthorised leave, a letter should still be sent to seek the reasons for the leave prior to referring for a fine to be issued. An example of an exceptional leave letter can be found in the appendix at the end of the guide.

The letter must also state that they are at risk of a fine. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days, it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day, then the parent(s) will be summoned to court.

Please note, if a family takes further exceptional leave (unauthorised leave) within 3 years, the school can refer again with a request for the matter to be presented to the Magistrates Court, if this is stated in the attendance policy. Please see the checklist to assist when making a referral in appendix E on page 19.

To make a referral please use the [on-line referral form](#) via the Stronger Families Hub.

**Referrals received without all the necessary information may not be processed however for Academy Schools any time spent obtaining the information will be charged against the schools Participation Service Level Agreement.**



## Children Missing Education

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Where a child has moved abroad or out of the area, and you have not been able to confirm that they are on roll at a new school, or their whereabouts remain unknown a referral to the Participation Service should be made using the [on-line referral form](#) via the Stronger Families Hub.

Children who are on roll at a school and refusing to attend, failing to attend regularly or missing from home are persistent absentee and will be managed by an allocated Participation Officer using the attendance process.

CME referrals received after initial enquiries by school colleagues, are managed by the CME Team. Please see the checklist to assist when making a referral in appendix E on page 21.

Statutory guidance available: [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Children Missing Education tracking and recording is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities. Schools should make every effort to track children within 10 days of their last date of attendance. On the 10th day if the child has still not been found then a referral should be made using the [on-line referral form](#) via the Stronger Families Hub.

Enquiries should continue, working in partnership with the Children Missing Education Team at the Civic Centre. Children must NOT be removed from roll until permission is granted by the Participation Officer for the school or by a Children Missing Education Team member.

## Elective Home Education

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a right to all parent(s) to provide education for their children at home that does not involve them being registered on a school's roll. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.

What process should schools follow when a parent elects to home educate their child(ren)?

Schools must notify the Local Authority when a parent withdraws their child from school to provide EHE.

In this circumstance a parent is encouraged to write to the Head Teacher requesting that their child is de-registered and confirm that it is their intention to home educate their child. Parents must include in their letter that they are 'taking responsibility for their child's education' and the school will need to complete the checklist sent to them by Admissions. Schools should include the letter and checklist when referring to the Admissions team.

All schools are expected to provide the borough's Elective Home Education Officer ([EHE@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:EHE@hillingdon.gov.uk)), with the following information via a dedicated form (the form is available via LEAP along with further information);

1. Parent's letter, or email, informing the school of their decision to home educate (if provided).
2. Reason/s the school are aware of why the parent has decided to home educate.
3. An up-to-date attendance record for the child.
4. Details of the allocated social worker, if the child has one.
5. List of attainment levels (useful for education advisers when they visit, or if the case is referred to the Fair Access Panel).
6. Notification/information if the child has special educational needs with or without an Education, Health and Care Plan.
7. Confirmation that the school has offered to provide parents with either previous classwork or a summary of the curriculum followed to date (and possibly the future curriculum plan). This will assist the parent with their planning for home education. The parent may decide to ignore this documentation hence their reason to EHE as they may have dissatisfaction with the education system. However, this will be a useful tool for some.

Please visit LEAP for further information on [Elective Home Education](#), which includes specific guidance for schools when parents approach you expressing their wishes to home educate.

# Exclusions

Sec. 2 p. 6 Statutory Guidance: Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England. Statutory guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion. September 2017

Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy. The guidance also reflects that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of pupils and staff within the school, which could be understood through a robust risk assessment. When practical, head teachers should give a final opportunity for the pupil to present their case before they take the decision to exclude.

Where a school has concerns about a pupil's behaviour it should try to identify whether there are any causal factors and intervene early in order to reduce the need for a subsequent exclusion. In this situation schools should give consideration to make contact with services (i.e. social care) that are already involved with the young person to understand the reasons for decline in behaviour and if no involvements, consider a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs

Guidance to Hillingdon Schools on reasonable steps to avoid Permanent Exclusions is available on the [Exclusions](#) page on LEAP

- Consider a change of form, tutor or adapted timetable
- Assessment by an Educational Psychologist (LA or independently commissioned)
- Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Child
- Commission Behaviour Support or equivalent
- Engage with Safer Schools Police Officer
- Refer to Participation Key Worker
- Individual Education Plan
- Managed Move
- Short term parttime timetable/re-integration programme
- Commission alternative provision such as The Skills Hub or Springboard West or equivalent
- Dis-apply the National Curriculum from Key Stage 4 and consider extended work experience
- Pastoral Support Plan
- Restorative approaches
- Solution focused approaches
- Use of Pupil Premium when applicable
- Time out arrangements
- Peer mentor/Staff Mentor

- Counselling
- Targeted programme, particularly Link Therapeutic Support programme, iChoose, boys and mens programme and Unique Swagga
- Sorted
- Engage with LBH SAS Team for children on ASD spectrum. They can be contacted on 01895 250516

Schools have been advised by the DfE in July 2020, in preparation for the reopening of schools following closure due to Covid 19, to update Behaviour Policies to support the re-engagement of pupils and the return to orderly and calm environments in which all pupils can achieve and thrive [Checklist for school leaders to support full opening: behaviour and attendance](#)

Failure to exhaust all alternatives to Permanent Exclusion may leave Hillingdon Schools vulnerable to criticism by an independent Review Panel and subject to penalty should the matter be escalated to First Tier Tribunal.

## Post 16

### September Guarantee Collection

The London Borough of Hillingdon has the responsibility (under the terms of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (ESA 2008) (sec. 18 & 68(4)) to ensure that every Year 11 and Year 12 pupil leaving school this year, or who left last year, is offered a guaranteed place in learning by the end of September. Increasing the participation of young people in education, employment and training post-16 is a key priority.

The September Guarantee survey must be completed on a template generated by the Participation Team. An email will be sent to all secondary schools in May to provide us with the intended destination of all your current Yr11 and Yr12's for next Academic Year. This information is then uploaded onto a central database.

### Destination Survey

The Local Authority must confirm the destination of all Yr12 and Yr13 pupils with schools in the Autumn Term and a template will be provided for completion.

### NEET Support

If a young person in Yr 12 or Yr13 is removed from roll or at risk of being removed, please notify the Post 16 team on [eet@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:eet@hillingdon.gov.uk) for support to be put in place.

# Other Services

## Home Visits

The Participation Team may, if capacity allows, carry out home visits for schools if there are cases where they have been unable to contact a family of a child not attending and the school has been unable to visit themselves. Schools must not rely on this resource, until they have exhausted all other routes to get into touch with families/parents. Where school have concerns, they should contact their Safer School Officer for support.

## Home Visits during a COVID outbreak

For planned visits, the Participation Team will send letters home to the family address, making them aware that a visit will take place. If they have any symptoms of COVID or are self-isolating, they are advised to get in contact with the Participation Team in advance of the visit so that alternative arrangements can be made.

## Assemblies

The Participation Team can also deliver a presentation at school assemblies to help promote attendance. Please let your Participation Officer know if you would find this helpful, to agree mutually convenient dates and so there is time to prepare and deliver.

## School's Meetings with Families

Schools can set up meetings with parents before poor attendance becomes entrenched. Early support may well resolve matters. You can arrange this meeting yourself and may invite your Participation Officer to attend to get the importance across to families.

**If there are any queries, please feel free to contact your Participation Officer or ring the team on 01895 250 858.**

# Appendices

# Appendix A

## Attendance template first letter

**(Please note this letter must be either posted out to both parents, or given in person and not be given to the child to pass on)**

**Child's name and DOB**

**RE: Attendance below 96%-97% (or schools attendance target)**

**Dear Mr and Mrs**

We are concerned about **(Child's name)** attendance. Our records show that **(Child's name)** current attendance is \*\*%.

As you are aware we want parents' support to improve attendance, so if there are any issues please get into contact with me, as we may be able to help and discuss any issues you may be having with getting **(Child)** into school.

As a result of **(Childs)** poor attendance, we have to initiate our attendance monitoring procedures.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the Local Authorities Participation Team who may invite you for an attendance panel. You are then at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day then you will be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Head Teacher/ Attendance Officer

# Appendix B

## Attendance template second letter

**Please note this letter must be either posted out to both parents, or given in person and not be given to the child to pass on)**

**Child's name and DOB**

**RE: Attendance between 92% to 90%**

**Dear Mr and Mrs**

Following my previous letter sent on **(enter date)**, we are disappointed to say that there has been no significant improvement in **(Childs names)** attendance.

**Our records show that (Child's name) current attendance is \*\*%.**

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at **(enter school name)**, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting **(Childs name)** into school.

**We are offering a meeting on (enter date and time). Please get into contact with us if you cannot attend.**

**Any future absences will need to be covered with medical evidence to be authorised.**

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the Local Authorities Participation Team who may invite you for an attendance panel. You are then at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day then you will be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely



# Appendix C

## Attendance template third letter

**(Please note this letter must be either posted out to both parents, or given in person and not be given to the child to pass on)**

**Child's name and DOB**

**RE: Attendance BELOW 90%**

**Dear Mr and Mrs**

As stated in our previous letters, **(child's name)** attendance has not improved and we therefore have no other option but to refer this matter to the Participation Team.

**Our records show that (Child's name) current attendance is \*\*%.**

Any absences will now be recorded as unauthorised until we receive medical evidence.

The Participation Team may invite you for an attendance panel where you are then at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day then you will be summoned to court.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Head Teacher/ Attendance Officer

# Appendix D

## Exceptional leave template first letter

**(Please note this letter must be either posted out to both parents, or given in person and not be given to the child to pass on)**

Name & address of parents

Date

Exceptional Leave in Term Time

Dear

Pupil name:

Dates of leave:

Further to your application for exceptional leave during term time, I write to inform you that I will not be authorising this absence. In line with the Department for Education and London Borough of Hillingdon guidelines, I am keen to optimise the learning opportunities for your child. There are 175 days per year allocated for school holiday & family activities.

It is my duty to draw your attention to **(school name)** Attendance Policy that specifies our position on Exceptional Leave during term time. In the disappointing event that you elect to pursue your travel plans, I will have no alternative but to refer this matter to the Participation Officer for our school.

The Participation Team may issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence. This is a fine of £120 per parent per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £60 per parent per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day then you will be summoned to court.

A penalty notice will only be issued in the first instance. Therefore, if you have been issued with a Penalty Notice previously or you choose to take further exceptional leave during term time, the matter will be progressed straight to Uxbridge Magistrate Court.

Yours sincerely

# Appendix E

## Unauthorised exceptional leave (Holiday) penalty notice request checklist

<b>Policy</b>	
Attendance Policy updated within last 12 months and provided to the Participation Service and available for parents?	Yes/No
<b>Registration Certificate</b>	
<p>Child's registration certificate shows their return mark? (Correct code for unauthorised exceptional leave is G).</p> <p>This is to be signed by the Headteacher with following wording "<b><i>I (full name) Headteacher of (school) certify that this is an accurate record of (child's full name) attendance. (Signed and dated).</i></b>"</p> <p>Please post original to the Participation Service or give to allocated Officer to support referral (a copy can be included with the referral</p>	Yes/No
<b>Parents request</b>	
Copy of parents request letter/form/email attached?	Yes/No
<b>Decline Letter from Headteacher</b>	
<p>Copy of decline letter posted first class/ hand delivered to parent? <b>Not given to pupil.</b></p> <p>If no request made, how is school aware of holiday? Please make reference to this in the decline letter.</p>	Yes/No

<p>Does the decline letter have the full names of both parents/carers, date of the leave, explanation of the referral to the Participation Officer and possible actions (Penalty Notice or Legal Action). <b>Template letter available on request.</b></p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>If leave is for an emergency please request evidence of the emergency, original flight booking details/medical evidence/certificates. Allow the family 1 week upon return from leave to provide the documents before referring to the Participation Service.</p>	
<p><b>Referral Form (<a href="#">Complete online</a>)</b></p>	
<p>Please complete online referral form and attached all correspondence and evidence.</p> <p>The referral must be made within 2 weeks of the child returning to school. Referrals received after this time may not be actioned.</p>	

## Appendix F

### Children missing education checklist

Has contact been made with parents(s)/carers/family members or any other emergency contacts either in writing or by phone?	Yes/No Details
Has school checked possible whereabouts with staff and pupils, including anyone who may be in touch via social media/mobile phone? Is there any other soft information (other students say family is on holiday)	Yes/No Details
Is the family known to Social Care? Is the child/ren subject to CP/CIN plan? If so please contact Social Care immediately.	Yes/No Details
Is the child/family known to any other agency? (eg YOS, Police etc)	Yes/No Details
Does the child have an EHC Plan? If yes please notify SEN Officer	Yes/No Details
Are there any other safeguarding issues?	Yes/No Details
Has a home visit been undertaken?	Yes/No Details
Has the family made any request for holiday/emergency leave?	Yes/No Details
Has the child/family been missing for 10 days or more?	Yes/No Details
What was the attendance prior to the child going missing?	Yes/No Details
Have parents identified a new school/move to a new area? Please contact the new school/LA before making a referral to KWP	Yes/No Details

# Appendix G

## COVID attendance codes

[Please see the School coronavirus \(COVID-19\) operational guidance](#)

### **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. The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

### **Administrative Codes**

#### **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).

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 a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. This code will apply where evidence has been received from a parent/carer or the school has investigated and found that the country's borders have been closed preventing travel back to the UK.

You can use this [List of sub-codes](#) that have been introduced into management information systems (MIS) to help you:

- extract attendance data to complete the daily educational settings status form
- consistently record non-attendance related to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- monitor non-attendance related to coronavirus (COVID-19) for your own purposes
- If you have an existing system for recording and monitoring non-attendance related to coronavirus you can continue to use this if you wish. The use of these sub-codes is not compulsory.

# Appendix H

## Checklist for behaviour and attendance summary

(full DfE version available [here](#))

**1. PLAN:** ensure your school has clear, consistent and robust behaviour and attendance policies and practices in place. These should be on your website and easily accessible. Please also ensure that all policies are updated regularly and the up to date policy is always available on your website.

**2. COMMUNICATE:** set high expectations for behaviour and attendance and actively communicate this to parents and pupils.

**3. BE CONSISTENT:** ensure expectations are enforced consistently

**4. SUPPORT:** identify pupils who are at risk of disengagement (including absence or poor behaviour), and provide specific support

**5. MONITOR AND IMPROVE:** track attendance, behaviour data and intelligence to intervene early and review policies and processes regularly

### 1. PLAN:

Review Attendance Policy:

- Be clear that attendance will be mandatory from the start of the new school year, except where statutory exemptions apply. Ensure that parents are clear about when pupils should not attend due to public health or clinical advice (see [guidance](#) ) and plan a process for keeping absence for these reasons under review, for example when a self-isolation period should come to an end. Ensure these pupils have access to remote education and that engagement is monitored.
- Take the register as usual and use attendance codes consistently (see [codes guidance](#)). Consider extending registration periods to accommodate any staggered start times.
- Resume the expectation that parents will let the school know if a child is unable to attend and the reason. Contact the pupil's parent or carer on the first day of absence where this does not happen. Schools should be clear with parents and carers that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.

- Consider how attendance policies will address new or more prevalent causes of absence (for example, anxiety) due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, balancing reward, support for pupils and families and sanctions appropriately.
- Refer to the Participation Team if attendance continues to be a concern, in line with your attendance Policy.

#### Review Behaviour Policy:

- Set clear, reasonable, and proportionate standards of behaviour. Make things as simple as possible so that the plans can be remembered and understood easily by everyone.
- Plan new routines, habits and systems, including:
  - expectations for arriving at and leaving school (including behaviour on public transport)
  - hygiene practices
  - lunch and break time routines
  - any transitions between lessons
  - staff supervision of movement during social times
  - safe use of school spaces and equipment
  - consider restrictions on movement within school and new hygiene rules (see [guidance](#)).
- Plan how new behavioural expectations will be monitored and supported. Take time to train staff in the behaviour that will be expected of them and also in the behaviour that they will be expected to teach to pupils.
- Clarify sanctions and rewards and how rules will be enforced consistently, including use of exclusions. Make sure that this can be effectively maintained in the changed school environment and take into account individual needs. Make explicit what behaviours are now considered more serious due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, for example purposefully coughing on someone, including any escalation points in how they will be dealt with.

## 2. COMMUNICATE:

- Make sure all staff, governors and trustees understand the importance of good behaviour and attendance and have a good understanding of the school's policies. This may include having an attendance and/or behaviour lead on the senior leadership team to ensure policies are implemented effectively and on the governing body to provide additional visibility, support and challenge.



- Communicate revised behaviour and attendance policies to staff, pupils and parents as soon as possible and ensure expectations are clearly understood. Ensure the Senior Leadership Team are visible around the school and invite discussion and feedback.
- Build a strong relationship and keep an open dialogue with parents who need further information or reassurance on the importance and/or safety of returning to school.

### **3. BE CONSISTENT:**

- Set and maintain a culture where excellent behaviour and attendance is valued and expected by everyone in the school community. Provide regular feedback to staff, pupils and families on how well they are executing new procedures.

### **4. SUPPORT:**

- Many pupils are likely to need some social and emotional support on their return to school. Some pupils will need extra support, such as those who have previously had poor attendance or fixed term exclusions as well as those new to the school, with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who have not engaged with school during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.
- Engage with the parents and carers of these pupils as soon as possible, ideally before the start of the new school year, to set expectations, understand concerns and build confidence.
- Make sure Pastoral Leads and Designated Safeguarding Leads have undertaken appropriate training to spot signs of distress and poor mental health. Ensure staff are able to identify where changes in behaviour (for example being fearful or withdrawn, aggressive or oppositional, or excessively clingy) may be an indication of an underlying issue.
- Where further support is needed, staff should consider what additional support or reasonable adjustments are needed and put a plan in place to deliver it, with regular points to review. Where pupils already have education, pastoral support or multi agency plans, these should be updated.
- Where children have special educational needs and disabilities, work with local services (such as health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place that will ensure a smooth return for pupils.

- For children who have a social worker or who are otherwise vulnerable, work with social workers and other relevant services to ensure the right services and support are in place. This includes making contact to discuss re-engagement over the summer and informing them if the child does not attend in the new school year.

## **5. MONITOR AND IMPROVE:**

- Regularly review your behaviour and attendance data and compare it with neighbouring schools and local and national averages where possible. This will inform your decisions on where to focus efforts to intervene early and prevent patterns of poor attendance and behaviour becoming habitual and entrenched.
- Invite feedback from staff and pupils regularly and discuss how new habits and routines are working, in order to provide useful data to support high-quality strategic decisions, inform practice and provide a regular commentary to all stakeholders on new expectations. Regularly use data to assess the effectiveness of behaviour and attendance policies and adjust provision in what is likely to be a changing context.
- All staff, governors and trustees should understand the importance of good behaviour and attendance and have a good understanding of the school's policies. This may include having an attendance and/or behaviour lead on the senior leadership team to ensure policies are implemented effectively and on the governing body to provide additional visibility, support and challenge.