



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Guidance on School Attendance Coding

2024/25

Contents of the attendance register

All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an electronic

attendance register in accordance with regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined.

Schools must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder) is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity as defined in regulation 6(4); or
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances as defined in regulation 6(5).

Schools must record whether the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or not. There is no requirement for schools to record whether the absence of pupils not of compulsory school age is authorised or not, but where possible schools should use the national attendance and absence codes to help them monitor their attendance and to form good attendance habits.

Schools must record the nature of the activity where a pupil of compulsory school age is attending an approved educational activity.

Schools must also record the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools cannot delete a pupil's name from the attendance register unless they have a reason (as set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended) to delete the pupil's name from the admission register; the pupil's name must be deleted from both registers at the same time.

Schools can notify the local authority of deletions from their roll by using the online form [here](#).

Attendance and Absence Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect 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 reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Present

- **Code / \:** **Present in school / = am \ = pm.** Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.
- **Code L:** **Late arrival before the register is closed.** Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate. If a pupil is recorded with code N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to record them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.

Absent (authorised)

- **Code C:** **Leave of absence granted by the school.** Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. Wherever referred to in this guidance a leave of absence should not be, and from certain types of school must not be, granted unless it has been applied for in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the headteacher believes the circumstances to be exceptional. Schools must consider each application for a leave of absence individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.
A pupil is pregnant: Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence. We would expect schools to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of each case. Ultimately it is at the headteacher's discretion how much leave to grant.
- **Code C1:** **A pupil is participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad:** A school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake regulated employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance, within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 if the local authority have given the pupil a licence for that performance. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. There are some exemptions, including when a *Justice of the Peace* has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Another is where the granting of Body of Persons Approval (BOPA). BOPAs can be issued by the local authority where a performance is to take place, or by the Secretary of State (generally only if there are to be many children involved and a number of different locations, but legislation does not limit this to those situations). Where a *Justice*

of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Where the licence specifies the dates that a pupil is to be away from school to perform, the school should record the absence for those days as if a leave of absence had been applied for and granted. However, where the terms of the licence or BOPA do not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to grant leave of absence. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code: C2 A pupil is subject to a temporary part-time timetable: All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education, but only part-time at the school in question (e.g. dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision or flexi-schooling) this code must not be used and the appropriate code for why the pupil is not in school for that session should be used.

The borough must be notified [here](#) of any pupil who is placed on a part-time table.

- **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made.** If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are suspended from school or excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register. When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive day of any suspension or exclusion. Where alternative provision is made schools should record this using the appropriate code for attending an approved educational activity.
- **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment).** Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools must record absences as authorised where pupils cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. Schools should not routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily as it places additional pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointments system particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Only where the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. Schools should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available. Pupils with long term illness or other health needs may need additional support to continue education, such as alternative provision arranged by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is registered at a school and whatever type of school they attend. The education must be full-time or as close to full-

time as the child's health allows. DfE's statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs sets out that local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Local authorities should have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs.

- **Code M: Medical or dental appointment.** Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. If a pupil is present at registration but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.
- **Code R: Religious observance.** Schools must record absence as authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body (not the parents). As a general rule, we would interpret 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' as a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day as authorised on this basis; the rest of the request would be a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C. Schools and local authorities may seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as:
 - Setting term dates around days for religious observance;
 - Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance;
 - Schools taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days; and
 - Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.
- **Code S: Study leave.** Schools can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(5), for a pupil to study for a public examination where the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence). Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, it should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence.
- **Code T: 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 not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be used when the pupil's parent(s) is/are travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups. Pupils from these groups whose parent(s) do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to attend school as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other pupils in terms of the requirements to attend school regularly once registered at a school. Where a pupil has no fixed abode because their parent(s) is/are engaged in a business or trade that

requires them to travel, there is an expectation that the pupil attends at least 200 sessions per year. The pupil must attend school as regularly as the business permits and therefore, if the business or trade permits the pupil to attend for more than 200 sessions per year, they should do so. To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes, it is expected that the pupil should attend school elsewhere when their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement.

Absent (unauthorised)

- **Code G: Holiday not granted by the school.** Where the school has not granted a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.
- **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided.** Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has been established the school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant code. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session. Code N should not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established after 5 school days, schools should amend the pupil's record to Code O.
- **Code O: Absent without authorisation.** Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence.
- **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed.** Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place.

Attending an approved educational activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is attending another school at which they are registered or taking part in off-site activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or unregistered alternative provision.

Pupils can only be recorded as attending an off-site activity if it is approved by the school, of an educational nature and supervised by someone authorised by the school. Ultimately, schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils taking part in an off-site educational activity so it would be reasonable to expect that the school would only authorise someone who was answerable to the school to supervise an activity.

The activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded and for pupils of compulsory school age the school must record the nature of the activity.

Attending another school at which the pupil is registered

- **Code D: Dual registered at another school.** The law allows for a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the school 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. 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 unexpected and unexplained absence are promptly followed up.

Attending an educational activity that takes place outside the school

- **Code B: Off-site educational Activity.** Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. For pupils of compulsory school age, schools must also record the nature of the activity, examples are:

- attending taster days at other schools;
- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision arranged or agreed by the school.

The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. The activity must be supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. Supervision means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity i.e., when a pupil is at home doing some schoolwork.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority. A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision; examples are:

- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision.

Schools should ensure that arrangements are in place whereby the education provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

- **Code J1: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.** Attending an interview 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 school. This must take place during the session for which it is recorded.
- **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity.** Taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school. If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. However, the final decision on approving the activity rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
- **Code V: Educational visit or trip.** Attendance at an organised visit or trip, 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. The educational visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the organiser of the visit or trip notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

- **Code W: Work experience.** The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded. Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the work experience notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- **Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.** Code Q is only used where a pupil is absent because the local authority has a legal duty to arrange home-to-school travel for the pupil and they have not done so, or because the pupil has no choice but to attend a school that does not qualify for such travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live. These circumstances are set out in law but in summary are where:
 - the local authority has a duty to arrange the pupil's home to school travel and has not; or
 - the pupil is registered at a private school that is beyond walking distance from the pupil's home and the local authority has not arranged boarding for them or enabled them to go to a state school nearer to their home; or
- **Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.** Where a pupil is unable to attend school because the transport provided by the school, or a local authority is not available, and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance. Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles.
- **Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.** A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- **Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.** The school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend.
- **Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.** Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be recorded with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays.
- **Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.** The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:
 - in police detention,
 - remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
 - detained under a sentence of detention.

If a pupil is remanded to local authority accommodation, they should attend school as normal where possible and where it is not possible any absence should be recorded using the appropriate code. Schools are expected to communicate with the pupil's Youth Offending Team worker while the pupil is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the pupil's educational needs, progress and return to the school upon

their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement; therefore, it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate.

- **Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.** The pupil is well enough to attend (otherwise Code I would have been recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend. This means the pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:
 - contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland), or
 - prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.
- **Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.** An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not mean the pupil has been prevented by an unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause, examples are:
 - Bail conditions (that prevent the pupil from attending the school or being present in the area where the school is situated).
 - Court attendance (where the pupil is legally required to attend Court).

Administrative codes

- **Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school.** Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time. For example, where parents have chosen for their 4-year-old child to attend part-time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age.
- **Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register.** To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must enter a pupil's name on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place offered, the local authority can inform schools on behalf of the parents and notify the school when the parent has agreed that the pupil will attend school. This can also be the case where the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications for school places. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must establish the reason and record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.
- **Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure.** Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:
 - days between terms;
 - half terms;
 - occasional days (for example, bank holidays);
 - weekends (where it is required by the management information system);
 - up to 5 non-educational days; and
 - use of school as a polling station.

Partial school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:

- 'staggered starts' or 'induction days' where different term dates have been agreed for different year groups - this code is used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend; and

- Use of part of the school as a polling station.

