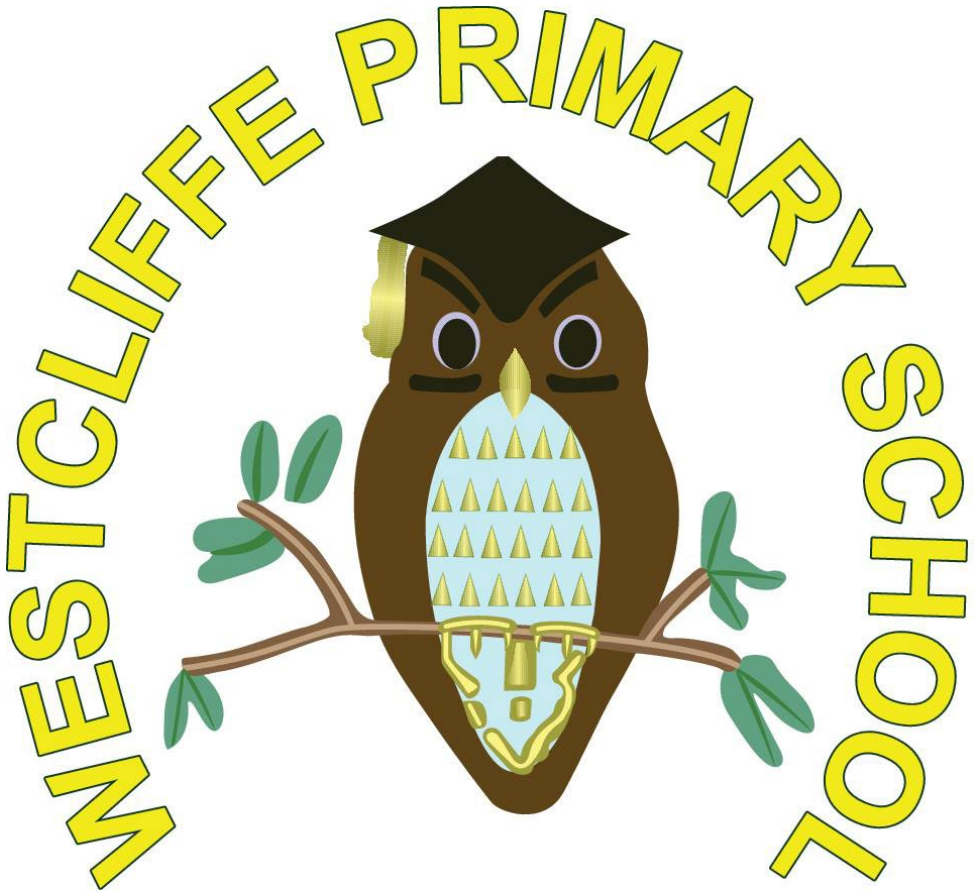
Attendance Policy



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1. Aims

Westcliffe Primary School promotes attendance to ensure learners are safe and as part of ongoing safeguarding. By attending Westcliffe Primary School children have the opportunity to meet their educational outcomes, have supportive adults in their lives and are able to share any concerns they have with staff who have a genuine interest in their development.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent (less than 90%) and severe absence (less than 50%)
- Ensuring every child has access to the education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school

We promote and support punctuality in attending the Westcliffe Primary School and all lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
    - The importance of good attendance
    - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
    - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- The governing board will receive termly attendance reports (including benchmarking against local and national data). The reports will include analysis of persistent and severe absence, key cohorts (including pupils with SEND, FSM, EAL), and the impact of interventions.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher, Robert Prestwood and can be contacted via 01724 861602 or headwps.westcliffeprimary@northlincs.gov.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education inclusion officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Zoe Turner and can be contacted via 01724 861602 or zoe.turner@northlincs.gov.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office no later than 10 minutes after the start of that particular session.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the another member of staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report a child's absence using either our Arbor app or by calling the before 8:45am on the first day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Zoe Turner on 01724 861602

3.8 Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend the school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

Westcliffe Primary School will keep an attendance register and place all children onto this register, using ScholarPack.

Westcliffe Primary School will take an attendance register at the start of the first session (morning) of each school day and once during the second session (afternoon). It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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.

Westcliffe Primary School will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (it is the Headteacher's decision to authorise an absence (not the parent)
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Westcliffe Primary School will keep every entry on the attendance register for at least 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Children must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day and the school day ends at 3:20pm.

The register for the first session will be taken as soon as possible and will be kept open until 9:05am. The register for the second session will be taken as soon as possible in the afternoon.

Children arriving at other times of the day may be marked present if this is part of an agreed plan for example at the request of a medical practitioner.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible, by calling the school via 01724 861602 or via our Arbor app.

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

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 Headteacher is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and has shared evidence of the appointment. However, we encourage parents 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 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 Lateness and punctuality

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (between 8:55am and 9:05am) will be marked as authorised late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (at 9:05am) will be marked as unauthorised late, using the appropriate code

- Children who are identified as being persistently late will have a meeting called with parents to discuss reasons for lateness and how this can be rectified. Persistent lateness may result in the issuing of a penalty notice where parents/carers will be subject to a monetary fine.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any child who is expected to attend the school but does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow up on their unrecorded absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephoning the listed contacts. If this proves unsuccessful, a text message will be sent out requesting reason for the absence to be given. If no response is received, a further text message is sent stating that unless a reason is provided for the absence, school staff will undertake a house visit to check on the safety and well-being of the absent pupil.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to other supporting agencies
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance using North Lincolnshire's ATTEND Framework
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Westcliffe Primary School is Robert Prestwood and deputy DSL is Melanie Troop. Attendance concerns will be treated as potential safeguarding concerns where appropriate. Persistent or unexplained absence may indicate a safeguarding or welfare issue; in such cases the DSL will consider a referral to local authority children's social care and will share attendance information with relevant agencies in line with our safeguarding policy. Staff must escalate concerns about attendance that may mask neglect or abuse to the DSL without delay.
- The school will share attendance information promptly with the local authority, social care and other relevant partners where there is a safeguarding concern or where a pupil is at risk of persistent or severe absence. The DSL is responsible for making any necessary referrals to children's social care and for recording the rationale and outcome of those referrals on the pupil's safeguarding record.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/ carers about their child's attendance and absence levels by sending attendance registers at the end of each half term.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office.The Headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before making a referral for the issuing of a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- The school will adopt a support-first approach. Where support is appropriate, the school will offer targeted support and make reasonable efforts to engage parents/carers. If engagement is not forthcoming and the national threshold is met (10 sessions unauthorised in a rolling 10 school week period), the school will consider issuing a Notice to Improve with an improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks, in line with the local authority code of conduct. If attendance does not improve and support has been exhausted or is not appropriate, the school will refer the case to the local authority for legal intervention, which may include a penalty notice.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Staff at the school are committed to promoting and achieving good levels of attendance in accordance with the school attendance policy and North Lincolnshire Council's ATTEND Framework. Underpinning this commitment is a belief that only if children attend school regularly, can they take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

In addition to this, the school promotes an environment where children feel safe and valued.

At Westcliffe Primary School, we promote good attendance by rewarding pupils. Classes who have the highest attendance each week earn an extra 10 minutes playtime and will receive a certificate in the weekly merit assembly. Each month, children with 100% attendance are entered into a draw with the winner being given a prize and every child who has 100% at the end of the school year is entered into a prize draw to be able to win a special prize.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where children present with complex barriers to attendance, we follow North Lincolnshire Council's ATTEND Framework. If necessary, an Early Help Assessment will be suggested.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where children present with complex barriers to attendance, we follow North Lincolnshire Council's ATTEND Framework. If necessary, an Early Help Assessment will be suggested.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Pupils who have been absent due to an unavoidable reason will be helped to reintegrate back into school. Measures may include:

- a phased return which slowly extends the time in school
- regular meetings with parents/ carers to discuss progress to a full time return

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual child level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of or individual children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- Attendance is a standing item on the agenda at Senior Leadership Team meetings and children or groups of children who are cause for concern are discussed and a plan is put into action
- Monitoring takes place as part of a whole school priority and starts within the classroom itself
- The school will monitor itself against local, regional and national data regularly and take action to improve attendance where needed
- The school will regularly feedback to the governing body its attendance data and actions taken to ensure attendance remains a key focus and priority for the whole school

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The School will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to all teaching staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with children and families at the earliest opportunity
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Follow the ATTEND Framework

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biennially by Robert Prestwood (Headtacher). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Achievement and Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Learner has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Learner has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a learner will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 learner is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Romani, Roma, and traveller absence	Learner from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Learner is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Learner is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for learner's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Learner arrived at school after the register closed

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