

# MANOR LEAS INFANT SCHOOL



## Learning for Life

### Attendance Policy

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# Attendance Policy for Manor Leas Infant School

At Manor Leas Infant School we wish to encourage a love of life-long learning by providing rich learning experiences. We will provide every pupil with the opportunity to reach their full potential by acquiring skills, knowledge and the understanding needed to maximise their potential for life. This will be achieved in a happy, caring and supportive environment where all feel valued and secure.

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

## 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 trustee board

The trustee 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

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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 trustees
- 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 (the Headteacher) is responsible for:

- 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

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### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer (Mrs Dickinson) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 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 within five minutes of the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Pass on key information to staff if appropriate, in order for them to support families with any attendance concerns

### 3.7 Parents

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
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

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- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the class teacher or Headteacher at the school

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

### 4. Recording attendance

#### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether each pupil is present or absent.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 3.10pm. Classroom doors open at 8.35am each day and pupils must be in school by 8.40am

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.20pm.

#### 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 by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school on 01522 681810 or [enquiries@manorleasinfant.org](mailto:enquiries@manorleasinfant.org). The school office staff will telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence asking them to explain why their child is absent.

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

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If there are any reasonable 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 school 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 as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We ask for proof of medical or dental appointments where possible.

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 pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Manor Leas Infant School discourages late arrival by challenging parents of children who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and time with their teacher, missing vital information and news for the day. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8:40am and we expect our children to be in the classroom by this time. Classroom doors are opened at 8:35am in order to support this
- Registers remain open for thirty minutes and close at 9:10am. This period will be extended in the event of bad weather. Children arriving during this period will be marked as present. Where a pupil arrives after the closure of the register without a good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence. This means that parents/carers could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists. A record of time of arrival and reasons for lateness will be kept for monitoring purposes
- If a child has a persistent lateness record the parents/carers will be asked to meet either the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time

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- We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to the children and celebrate good class punctuality

### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts and have concerns about the welfare of a pupil, the school may contact the police
- 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 appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- 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 the school, significant absence from school may result in a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2)

### ➤ 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via attendance reports in term 2, 4 and 6.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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:

- 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.

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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 four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence will be regarded as **unauthorised**. Whilst it is not possible to list every possible exceptional circumstance, the following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness - It is appropriate for parents to keep children away from school when they are not well enough to attend lessons. However, it is equally inappropriate for parents to keep children away from school for trivial ailments, particularly ailments which would not keep parents away from work. We will monitor the reasons that children are not in school due to illness. If we have concerns that a pupil has been unnecessarily absent, we will challenge the parent's explanation and seek evidence of the illness
- Medical/dental appointments, ideally where proof is available. Parents are asked to take children to appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Leave to attend the wedding or funeral of a close family member. Where the event is not taking place in the locality, an additional two days **MAY** be granted for travel purposes (one day either side of the event)
- A member of the family is seriously ill and there has been a family trauma
- A member of the family is a member of the armed forces returning from or scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad
- There has been a significant family event and the leave of absence will help support the rehabilitation or welfare of the parent or child
- Up to one day's absence for children of families who are relocating out of the area in order to visit their new school
- 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

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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)
- Attending an off-site examination or sporting competition

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 arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- 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 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 headteacher (or school attendance officer, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police 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.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing 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

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.

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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

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility; parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Reward the class with the highest attendance each week with a certificate and highlight them on our Attendance Tree display
- Contact parents/carers if their child's attendance falls to 95% (350/380 school sessions for the academic year)
- Include an attendance report on our school website and award certificates to children with 97% attendance as this our school target (350/380 school sessions for the academic year)
- Award additional certificates for children achieving 100%
- Provide parents with a breakdown of their child's attendance at the end of Term 2, 4 and 6

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

### 7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

The school will work with pupils, parents and carers to support any pupils who experience a prolonged period of absence from school, either through ill health or other unavoidable circumstances. The support provided will be determined on a case by case basis, but may include reduced timetables, support from the SENCO or external agencies.

## 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 and whole-school level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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

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 trustee board.

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### 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence that it has identified via data analysis
- 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 severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance analysis to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the trustee board
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

### 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. Absence at this level is causing significant damage to a child's education and we need the fullest support and co-operation of parents/carers to tackle this. We monitor thoroughly all absences and the reasons given. Cases reaching or seen to be approaching the PA threshold are given priority and we will inform parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

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

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- Send letters and 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
  - Develop an action plan with clear targets to improve attendance
- 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)

Here is an outline of our monitoring processes:

1	<p>Attendance Officer meets with Headteacher to discuss attendance and punctuality each term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss children who are at 95% or lower attendance.</li> <li>• Discuss children who are at 93% or lower attendance.</li> <li>• Discuss children who are at 92% or lower attendance.</li> <li>• Discuss children who are late attending school.</li> </ul>
2	<p>Decisions are made regarding communication with parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class teacher to discuss with parents if a child is at 95% or lower attendance</li> <li>• A traffic light letter to go home to parents if a child is at 93% or lower attendance</li> <li>• A monitoring letter to go home to parents if a child is at 92% or lower attendance</li> <li>• Parents requested to attend meeting with Deputy/Headteacher if a child is at 90% or lower attendance</li> <li>• Letters are also sent home acknowledging improvements in attendance where appropriate</li> </ul>
3	<p>Education Welfare Officer / Attendance and Inclusion Team contacted for advice / support where child's absence falls below 90%.</p>
4	<p>Penalty notice documentation considered where a child's absence falls to 85%.</p>

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on a yearly basis by the trustee board. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full trustee board.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Attendance Policy for Manor Leas Infant School

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

- Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm
- Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed
- Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded
- Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure