Much Birch Primary School Attendance Policy

Policy implemented: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

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Regular attendance and punctuality are essential components of a child's education. To make the most of the learning opportunities provided within the school, children need to have the continuity of provision that consistent attendance allows. We believe that the most critical factor in promoting good attendance is the development of a positive attitude towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Updated:	September 2026
Review date:	September 2027
Head teacher:	Ms B Davies
Education Welfare Officer:	Sam Lait – Herefordshire school attendance & engagement officer
Chair of Governors:	Rev Mark Johnson

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and draws from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and we have high attendance expectations for all pupils, we will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In implementing this policy, we will take into consideration our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This attendance policy is also consistent with other school policies in Appendix 3

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy- Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Section 1: Statement of Intent

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential.
We want every child to:

- Attend regularly
- Attend punctually
- Attend ready and prepared to learn, including wearing the right uniform and bringing the correct equipment

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

We must consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. (Appendix 2)

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body

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

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

Ms Davies, Mrs Ricketts & Mrs Tweddell of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school on guidance from the local authority.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

Responsibilities of The Attendance Officer, Education Welfare Officer and the Senior Leadership Team

- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data, identifying early patterns of absence
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about individual pupils
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and punctuality, putting effective strategies in place as a school team
- Advising the headteacher when a referral is made to Herefordshire Council

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act), and permitting absence from school that the school does not authorise creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 8.50 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Request in writing any planned absences at least 6 weeks in advance
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an **exceptional** circumstance
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. School request that parents keep the school updated with any change of address and contact numbers (home and work) and names of other family members/friends we may contact if necessary

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. School request that parents support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum and provide evidence to support appointments, failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Section 3: Recording Attendance

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

The school will open at 8.30 am.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8.50 am each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55 am and will be kept open until 9.10 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 pm and will be kept open until 1.10 pm.

The register will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the school day. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing, leading to possible further absence.

The school day begins at 8.50 am, and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.

All lateness is recorded daily. The courts will require this information should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as an unauthorised absence and coded U. This mark shows them to be on-site but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded M, if proof of an appointment is provided. Please be advised that, where possible, doctor's and dentist's appointments are to be made

outside of school hours or during school holidays. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered an unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

Parents, guardians, or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians, or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and the support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined, a referral may be submitted to the Herefordshire Council, which may initiate legal proceedings.

Section 4: Reporting Absence

First-day absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent, you must contact us as soon as possible, before 8.50 am, on the first morning of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
If your child is absent, we will:

- telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we must ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance;
- invite you in to discuss the situation with a member of the attendance team;
- Where a child is on a child-in-need plan or looked after, contact will be made with the relevant social worker on day 1.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers on the first day of absence from the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family. At this point, we may conduct a home visit to ensure the child's well-being.

Tenth-day absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. It would be helpful if you could ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. Any pupil who is persistently absent will be monitored and put on an action plan, if required. A member of the attendance team will meet with pupils, and their families whose attendance cause concern. Where necessary, home visits are made to discuss ways attendance could be improved and the barriers that may need removing: This could include:

- Agreeing an attendance support plan
- Signposting to outside agencies

In situations of persistent truanting, a parent/carer may be referred to Herefordshire Council.

Section 5: Requesting a Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether the absence is authorised at all.

The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this, as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. **There is, however, no legal entitlement to time off in school term time to go on holiday, and in the majority of cases, holidays will not be authorised.**

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to write to the head teacher 6 weeks in advance and before making any travel arrangements. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. School may request supporting evidence.

Any absences taken prior to the request date and following the request date will be unauthorised unless evidence is received to support the absences. If the Headteacher does not authorise the absence and parents still choose to take their child on holiday, this will be deemed an unauthorised absence. As a result, a referral may be submitted to Herefordshire Council, who may initiate legal proceedings in line with their code of conduct.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 6: Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire academic year unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- authorised absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request.
- This includes parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily.
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be when a parent states that a child is unwell, but on return to school, there is evidence that the child has been on holiday. Parents will be notified.

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

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

Section 7: Supporting Attendance

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may worsen things.

Contact the office immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and is properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

School strategies for supporting attendance

As a school, we encourage good attendance through a range of strategies, including:

- Listening to parents and pupils, building positive relationships
- Letters to parents to stress the importance of good attendance
- Encourage positive engagement with support services
- Celebration assemblies
- Individual attendance tracker
- Individual attendance plans
- Attendance focus groups

When attendance falls below expected levels for the school, the following early interventions will take place:

- Attendance is examined daily for daily absence
- Weekly attendance analysis by SLT
- Daily input from the teacher
- Attendance meetings with parent/carers and pupil
- Work with at-risk pupils
- Work in partnership with parents by developing tailored attendance plans

Section 8: Legal Measures for Tackling Poor Attendance

Parental Responsibility

A parent includes any person who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996, irrespective as to whether those persons are biological parents. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance or the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence). Parents are expected to work with the school to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together.

Referrals to Herefordshire Council

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

We will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. the child or family has failed to engage with help and support, and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and the decisions regarding legal actions are made by Herefordshire Council in accordance with their code of conduct: Herefordshire Council penalty notice code of conduct.

- Attendance Plans
- Written Warnings
- Issue of a Notice to Improve
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

The decision on whether to refer to Herefordshire Council ultimately rests with the Headteacher.
This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Once the school has referred to Herefordshire Council, they consider the facts and decide the appropriate action in accordance with Herefordshire Councils Penalty Notice code of conduct

National Threshold

The national threshold has been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks1 , with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
(a) Code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday),
(b) Code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10 (3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and
(c) Code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

Notice To Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended.

- The length of improvement will usually be between 3 - 6 school weeks.
- In most cases, notices to improve will not be issued where support is not appropriate (for example in circumstances relating to a holiday in term time).

If a Notice to Improve is not appropriate a written warning will be sent to the parents before referring for a penalty notice. In all cases where parents are being referred for legal intervention they will be informed in writing.

Penalty Notice in respect of failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil under section 444A Education Act 1996:

- The National Framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. Parents will not be issued with a third penalty notice.
- If the first penalty notice is paid within 21 days, the penalty is £80. If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £160.
- If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period parents will not be given the opportunity to pay the lower amount and will be required to pay £160 within 28 days. Herefordshire Council will not accept part payment or payment after 28 days.
- If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first or the penalty notice is not paid in full before the expiry date, Herefordshire Council may prosecute under S444(1) or (1A) of Education Act 1996.
- For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (where guilt was established in a court) but not those proceedings which were withdrawn.
- Once 3 years have elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases, it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

If in an individual case Herefordshire Council believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. Circumstances where this may apply include (not exhaustive):

- Several term time holidays below the threshold.
- Repeated absence for birthdays or family events
- When a parent purposefully tries to avoid a penalty notice by taking their child out of school when the school is open for four days for pupils and closed on the fifth day due to a bank holiday or training day.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice. Penalty notices may only be withdrawn for the following reasons: where it is determined that the notice should not have be issued; where the notice should not have been issued to the person named as the recipient; or where it appears to the Council that the notice contains material errors.

Excluded Pupil

For a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school and is excluded from that school, either for a fixed period, or permanently, his/her parent/carer is guilty of an offence under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 if: a) the child in question is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of each and every period of exclusion; b) the parent must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of their duty and the dates the exclusion relates to; c) If all criteria are met,

a penalty notice will be issued pursuant to section 105 Education and Inspections Act 2006 A 'Notice to Improve' will not be issued.

Section 9: Use of Data

Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with Herefordshire Council and other agencies if a pupils' attendance is a cause for concern in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. On a regular basis, the Senior Leader is responsible for attendance in conjunction with the attendance team.

Data	Regularity	Provided to
Daily registers	Daily	SLT
Weekly registers	Weekly	SLT
Individual learner % attendance data	Weekly	SLT
3+ day absence	Weekly	SLT
Less than 95% attendance lists	Weekly	SLT

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least six years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic backups. The pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Section 10: Internal Truancy

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be reported to the school office. If a pupil leaves the school premises the parents will be contacted and it is their parental responsibility to return their child to school.

Section 11: Children Missing Education

When pupils leave school, and no information regarding their new school/placement has been received by the school and/or parents/carers cannot be contacted, the school has a duty of care regarding safeguarding and must contact the Local Authority immediately to advise of this situation.

This means the Local Authority has a legal duty to investigate, this will include liaising with social care, police and other agencies to track and locate the pupil. Parents who give the new school details of the pupil's new school and location avoid unnecessary investigations and concern.

Section 12: Contact Information

It is paramount that parents/carers keep school updated with all new contact details of change of address and landline or mobile telephone numbers. If you are starting a new job and have a work contact number, please let us know immediately. This is to ensure we can contact you in an emergency.

Please refer to our school website for updates regarding health and further supporting information.

- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/
- https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/02/back-to-school-week-everything-you-need-to-know-aboutschool-attendance/

Section 13: Key Contacts

School contact details for reporting absence

- The first point of call is the school office at mailto:admin@much-birch.hereford.sch.uk
- Or telephone – 01981 540254

Appendix 1: DFE Attendance codes

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

Summary of Attendance Codes and Meanings

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, a pupil should be recorded as present or absent in the Attendance Register. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non –non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admissions register at the time.

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
K	Attending Education provision arranged the LA	• The nature of the provision must also be recorded. • Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	• The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip. • Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.	Attending an approved

Full information contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Statutory Attendance Guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024.

1. <u>If a pupil is present in school the following codes from table 1 should be used</u>

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/	Present at school AM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
\	Present at school PM	Must be in school at registration	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed.	Attending (present)

2. <u>If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code from table 2 should be used.</u>

		• The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. • Code V can only be used if the pupil is present at the visit.	educational activity (present)

P	Participating in a Sporting Activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	• P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. • The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; • • the activity is of an educational nature; • the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and the activity is 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.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending Work Experience	• W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA • • In session for which it is recorded The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under • • sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014; the activity is of an educational • nature; the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and the activity is 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.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	• B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA • • In session for which it is recorded The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families • Act 2014; • the activity is of an educational nature; the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

		• the activity is 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. • As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education'. pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.	
D	Dual Registered at another school	• The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. • Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. • Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)

3. <u>If a pupil is absent with leave (NB schools not required to follow regulation 11 in granting a leave of absence should still use the relevant code)</u>

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	• Performance licence issued by LA or • Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or • Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose.	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	• Agreement in advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • Minimum time necessary • Where pupil is absent at registration	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for Interview	• Agreement in Advance • Application by parent child normally lives with • In session absence recorded	Authorised absence

S	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination		Authorised absence
X	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school	• For part time attendance • Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	• • Exceptional circumstances if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil • should temporarily be educated only part-time • Temporary See Working Together to improve attendance	Authorised Absence
C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	• • Exceptional circumstances • No blanket approach • School discretion Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.	Authorised absence

4. <u>Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons</u>

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	• The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. • To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.	Authorised absence

R	Religious Observance	• The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	• The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised Absence
E	Suspended or Permanently excluded with no provision made alternative	• The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised Absence

5. <u>Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause</u>

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if— (a) a local authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil under section 508B(1) of the 1996 Act(13) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil because of section 508E(2)(c) of the 1996 Act(14) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and— (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home; (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school; and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency	Not a possible attendance

Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
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 marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.	Not a possible attendance
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,	Not a possible attendance
		• remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention. A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	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 and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of 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, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))	Not a possible attendance

6. <u>Absent for unauthorised reasons</u>

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. 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 not longer than 30 minutes.	Unauthorised absence

Administrative Codes

Code	Meaning	Statistical Value
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	NOT COLLECTED
#	Planned whole school closure	NOT COLLECTED

[Appendix 2: Attendance thresholds and every school day counts]

We will use the following thresholds in reporting to parents:

98% and above	Excellent
96.5-97.9%	Good
95-96.4%	Satisfactory
90-94.9%	Cause for Concern
Below 90%	Unacceptable

Please see the chart below which shows how absence impacts attendance and hours of learning lost. Below 95% begins to cause concern in the number of hours in lost learning. The table above breaks down the percentages of attendance and how many days/hours are lost in just 1 academic year.



The diagram below equally shows how the number of minutes late can affect the number of hours loss of learning. Being 5 minutes late every day of the academic year means 15 hours lost. Every minute in school is utilised, and this is from the very moment the children enter the school building.



Appendix 3: Links to other policies

Links with other school Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEN policy- Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Other relevant legislation and guidance

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
- https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/schools-education/school-attendance-absences Herefordshire Council penalty notice code of conduct

Completed by Mr M Warley (August 2025)