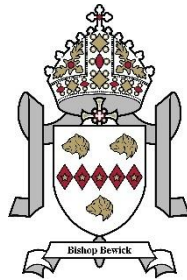




St Catherine's Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

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Mission Statement

At St. Catherine's, we shine bright by learning, loving, and caring in an environment where we feel safe, happy and confident. We believe everyone is special and made in God's image. We help each other grow and share our gifts to make the world a better place.

We believe in:

- being kind, respectful, and fair to everyone (service)

- living like Jesus in and out of school (honesty)
- celebrating everyone's achievements, big or small (inspire)
- nurturing our relationships with families, parish, and communities. (Nurturing)
- valuing our differences and learning from each other (Embracing)

We let our light shine brightly for all to see! Be who God wants us to be. Together, we can achieve and set the world on fire with kindness and faith.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Board of Trustees

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor responsible for attendance is Susan Stoddard and can be contacted via 0191 232 6803

2.2 The headteacher

The headteacher/principal is responsible for:

- 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
- The Head Teacher is Miss Hoey and can be contacted via 0191 232 6803 or office@stcatherinesnewcastle.org

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Hoey and can be contacted via susan.jenkins@stcatherinesnewcastle.org

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Susan Jenkins and can be contacted via susan.jenkins@stcatherinesnewcastle.org

2.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via Arbor twice a day.

2.6 School Admin staff

School Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the pastoral lead to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use.
- Telephone the school after the first day of absence if the absence is continuing.
- Keep the school well informed, especially about circumstances that might mean your child is absent for several days.
- Provide medical evidence, if possible, indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation arises. This might include an appointment note or an NHS App message. Whenever possible all appointments should be made outside of school hours.
- Ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if your child is going to be late, e.g., if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Book family holidays during school holiday time.

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 is not authorised by the Head Teacher creates an offence in law.

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their lessons on time.

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We must record every half-day absence as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why we always need information about the cause of any absence. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, emergencies, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time.

Only schools can authorise an absence. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

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 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 also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive at school by **8.40am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.50am** and will be kept open until **for 30 minutes after** the session begins. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.00/1.15**.

First Day Response Procedures

We will follow First Day Response (FDR) procedures by:

- Contacting you on the first day of absence by telephone/text, to try to ascertain the reason.
- Making a home visit if phone calls are unanswered.
- Informing any appropriate professionals or agencies working with your child or family.

If your child is still too unwell to attend the following day, you must contact us again before 9am to inform us. If we already have concerns about your child's attendance, we may carry out a home visit even if you have given us a reason for the absence.

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

If the authenticity of the 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 another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. Also, if a child's attendance is under 90% and the family have signed an attendance contract parents/carers will be asked to provide medical proof of illness.

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 advance.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable, and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents, birthdays.
- Sibling unwell.
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (after the close of registration).
- Truancy.

In some cases, we may change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but there is subsequent evidence they have been on holiday. We will communicate any such change to parents/carers.

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

Exceptional circumstances are situations that are unforeseen, unavoidable, and genuinely prevent an individual from attending work, classes, or scheduled commitments. Examples include serious personal illness or injury (such as hospitalization, surgery, or a contagious illness), family emergencies or bereavement (for example, the critical illness or death of a close family member), and medical or mental health reasons requiring urgent treatment or support. Other valid reasons may include unexpected personal crises such as a household emergency (fire, flood, or burglary), loss of housing, or significant transport disruptions caused by severe weather or infrastructure failure. Absence may also be justified by legal or civic obligations, including jury duty or required court appearances, as well as the observance of major religious or cultural events. In addition, compassionate consideration may be given for individuals affected by a traumatic event, sudden childcare breakdown, or other comparable exceptional situations.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant 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, accessible the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart please note only one day will be authorised,

4.2 Term time absence for holidays

Any request for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will not be authorised.

The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days) within 10 school weeks, consideration will be given if a referral should be made to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be issued or prosecution where repeated penalty notices have been issued. Where the threshold has not been met in the case of persistent avoidance, for example, repeated absence for birthdays or other family events, the school will have discretion to refer the case to the Local Authority. If in an individual case, the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

4.3 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address.

4.4 Unplanned absence

First Day Absence Contact

You must notify us by 9am if your child is unable to attend for any reason. If we don't receive notification, we will contact you as early as possible in the school day. This is because your child may have set off for school but not arrived.

3.3 Continued Absence Procedures

If after three days of absence, your child has not been seen and you have not contacted the school, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with you, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

If this is unsuccessful, we will make a home visit to check the safety and wellbeing of your child. We may also contact officers from the Local Authority.

If we have concerns about your child's attendance, we will invite you into school to discuss the matter. If attendance fails to improve, we will refer the matter to the Local Authority.

3.4 Children Missing from Education (CME)

All Local Authorities have a legal responsibility to identify young people who are missing from education (CME) and those young people at risk of missing education. Where necessary, Local Authorities must return them to suitable education.

This applies to young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education elsewhere and have been out of any education for a substantial period, usually more than four weeks.

We have a legal duty to undertake our own checks first and will notify the Local Authority if a young person has left the school and their whereabouts are unknown.

3.5 Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

If your child is likely to be absent for longer than 15 days due to health needs you should tell us as soon as possible. We will work with you, the Local Authority and medical professionals where appropriate to ensure that your child will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes public exam provision and the education of siblings where your family have had to travel and stay away from the home. Such an absence will normally involve medical professionals. In most cases, we will try to minimise the amount of time your child spends away from school, so that they stay connected with their teachers and their friends.

3.6 Part-time Timetables

All young people of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary partial timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is considered to help the pupil access as much education as possible and as part of a re-integration package.

A partial timetable must last no longer than six weeks. After that point a young person is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. If we believe that a partial timetable is in the best interests of your child, we will discuss this with you. We will agree formal review arrangements to take place. In agreeing to a partial timetable, we agree to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a **C2**, which is an authorised absence.

3.7 Persistent and Severe Absence Procedures

If your child misses 10% or more of their schooling across a year **for whatever reason, whether it is authorised or unauthorised, or a mixture of both**, they become a 'Persistent Absentee.' Missing 50% or more of school is defined as severe absence. At this point your child would not be receiving a suitable education and their outcomes will be affected. We will inform you if your child is moving into the category of persistent absence,

and your child's attendance will be monitored. This is because young people can easily get into a habit of missing school. Without help it can rapidly get worse.

It is essential that we avoid the kind of impact that poor attendance can have on your child. If you are facing circumstances which make it difficult to ensure your child's attendance at school, you should tell us. We will meet with you and provide access to wider support services to help remove barriers to attendance.

We monitor registers to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA). Initially we will try to resolve the problem with you. We will agree actions to improve attendance. However, if the pattern continues, we will make a referral to the Local Authority.

3.8 Reluctant attenders/school refusal

You should do everything possible to ensure your child attends school. However, if the reason for your child's reluctance appears to be school based, such as difficulty with accessing the curriculum or bullying, you should discuss this with us at the earliest opportunity and we will do everything possible to resolve it. Remember that issues like this are rarely solved immediately and can only be solved if you work with us to get your child in to school. Supporting your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse.

3.9 Applications for leave of absence in term time

If your child is performing, for example in a Christmas pantomime, you can seek leave of absence from us for your child to take part in a performance. You must contact us to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether your child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, our discretion as to whether to authorise this. We will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. If your child is taking part in activities organised outside of the school e.g., regional, county, national and international events and competitions, you may seek leave of absence from school. Again, it is down to our discretion as to whether to authorise this. We will wish to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Head Teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

3.10 Leavers

You must inform us in writing if you are planning to remove your child from this school to move to another, other than at normal leaving times. You must give us full information about your plans and reasons for moving, including date of move, new address, the new school your child will attend and start date when known. This is because we have a legal responsibility to ensure that no child goes missing from education. We also need to transfer school information.

3.11 Elective Home Education (EHE)

If you wish to remove your child from school with a view to educating at home, we will work with other key professionals and coordinate a meeting with you if possible. This is a significant step. You should consider whether you are able to provide a suitable education for your child, how they will gain necessary qualifications and whether your provision will enable them to return to a school if your circumstances change. We will pass information about your decision to the Local Authority, which is responsible for monitoring EHE. The Local Authority will check that you are able to provide a suitable education. If at any point the Local Authority has concerns that your provision is unsuitable, it may take legal action to put your child back on a school roll.

We will inform the Local Authority of your decision to home educate before removing your child from the school roll. An online notification will be submitted via the [Services to Schools](#) website.

3.12 Pupils who do not start school

Young people who are allocated places in a school but fail to start are also treated as Children Missing Education. If we have been unable to make contact with you during a ten-day period after the expected arrival, we will refer your child to the Local Authority for further checks.

3.13 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers need to contact the school office by phone or email to inform them of their child's planned absence. The school office will request for proof of absence to add to Arbor.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside 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/carer 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.

3.14 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
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Children who arrive late after the doors close at 8.50am must be signed in by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. We will ask the reason for the lateness. If a child arrives late, but unaccompanied, we will contact you and seek a reason for the poor punctuality.

When a child's lateness is a regular occurrence, Susan Jenkins, Family Support Advisor, will contact the parent/carer for to discuss lateness. Each half term child with lateness/punctuality concerns will received a letter.

3.15 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Absence text will be send to the parent/carer in the first instance
- If not contact is made a call the pupil's parent/carer 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, the school may ask Susan Jenkins to make a home visit.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

3.16 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly traffic light letters. If necessary, the School Attendance Officer will follow this up with a telephone conversation or a planned meeting.

4.4 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised and support has been provided but not worked or engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term time).

A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence. This can be a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10-school-week period that may span different terms or school years (e.g., 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

From Autumn Term 2024, the Local Authority will only issue 2 penalty notices to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance and will recognise those children in the green zone (above 97%) with the following:

- Weekly Best Class Attendance trophy.
- Golden Ticket award prizes (if the child is in on time every day, they are entered into a weekly prize draw).
- Attendance Display
- Attendance Treats at end of year
- Half termly traffic light letter to help self-improvement of attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Susan Jenkins, Family Support Advisor, will arrange meetings with parents to discuss strategies on how to improve attendance and offer an attendance contract.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority, or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn 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 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - '[Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024](#)'

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority.
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.

C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly

Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil 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	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2

Information for Parent/Carers – Common Questions

Q. Kids get loads of holidays, plus there are bank holidays and teacher strikes. Why do we get fined for keeping them off?

A. The most obvious reason is that bank holidays and strikes are permitted in law, whereas absence from school is not. However, the most important reason is that if your child is absent while the rest of their class is at school, your child will be behind when they return. No young person likes being in this situation. It can knock their confidence. School staff will help your child catch up, but this takes time and takes staff away from other pupils who need them.

Q. I understand why it's important for older kids to attend, but why is it so important when they're younger?

A. It's really important that children make a good start as early as possible in their school life. If they are absent a lot they will fall behind academically and socially, and this will make the move into secondary school much more difficult. If children get into the habit of thinking that it is OK to miss school, it will definitely get worse as they get older. Most parents faced with a teenager who refuses to go to school wish they had been firmer about attendance when their child was younger.

Q. My child cries when I take her to school. What can I do?

A. It's not uncommon for young people to feel anxious about going to school, and it is often tough for parents to take a firm line. However, it is really important for children to get into the habit of going to school right from the start. It's very rare for a young person to continue to be distressed after they have arrived in school and settled in, so don't sit worrying all day. School staff are experts at helping young people who are anxious, so if it is happening regularly, talk about it with staff.

Q. My child always says they feel ill. How do I know it's OK to send them to school?

A. Unless they have an obvious medical condition, it is usually worth sending your child to school. Once young people are at school, they are usually too busy to feel anxious. If your child becomes ill at school, we will get in touch.

Q. Sometimes my child is really tired. Surely, it's better to let them sleep rather than send them in to school?

A. The problem with doing this is that they get into a different sleep pattern, and it makes the problem worse. Many young people are tempted to play games or be on their phones late at night. It's important to help them take responsibility for being ready for school the next day. If they are tired, they will sleep better the following evening.

Q. I'm stressed about other things. If my kid won't get out of bed there's nothing I can do, is there?

A. It is extremely stressful if your child refuses to come to school, especially if you have other pressures in your life. However, don't be tempted to accept it. Please come and speak with staff at school. Together we may be able to find a solution. If your child isn't attending and you don't contact us, our only recourse is legal action.

Q. My child is being bullied and doesn't want to go to school.

A. We need to work together if you think your child is being bullied. Please read our anti-bullying policy and get in touch with us.

Understanding absence percentages

You may wonder why a school would be concerned if your child's attendance is below 96%. This may make it easier to understand:

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks
90% equates to a day off every two weeks
85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks
80% equates to one whole day off every week
A secondary age child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

Appendix 3 - Additional Information

Attendance Contracts – guide for parents

What is an attendance contract?

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and the school. An attendance contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly.

An attendance contract is meant to support you and the school to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. The attendance contract is not intended to be a punishment as it is to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

What does it involve?

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

Do I have to enter into an attendance contract?

Entry into an attendance contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to address any underlying issues and to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of an attendance contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.

If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school.

How is an attendance contract arranged?

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. Depending on their age and understanding, your child can attend part or all of the meeting.

At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you and the school representative.

Working together to improve attendance

All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.