

# **DARRICK WOOD INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE AND FIRST DAY CALLING POLICY**

**JANUARY 2022**

Next Review Date: October 2024

*Staff should make themselves aware of all policies and amendments or updates to policies and adhere to the same, which will be made available on relevant websites and internal data and computer systems.*

Darrick Wood Infant & Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

# **DARRICK WOOD INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE AND FIRST DAY CALLING POLICY**

### **Aims**

Chancery Education Trust and its Academy Schools seek to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential.

The Academy School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the Academy School community feels wanted and secure.

All Academy School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure every child attends regularly and punctually.

The Academy School will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and support those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To achieve the above, the Academy School will maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Staff and Governors are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to achieve a MINIMUM of 97% attendance throughout the Academy School.

### **Legislation and guidance**

The Law requires that children attend school on every day that it is open. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day it is open.

The 'Attendance Register' should, therefore, only show children as being absent due to unavoidable circumstances. Absence without good reason is against the law and the parent/ carer who allows their child to be absent without good reason may be fined/prosecuted.

All absences from school (this includes half day absences) must be classified by the Academy School (not the parent) as being either authorised or unauthorised. In assessing the absence as being authorised or unauthorised, it is therefore necessary to have information as to the reason (s) for the non-attendance. Only the Academy School can authorise an absence, not the parent.

## Academy School procedures

### Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must **arrive** in school by 8.55am (8.45am and 12.45pm Nursery) on each school day.

The register for the **first session** will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.30am.

The register for the **second session** will be taken at:

- 1.15pm (Reception and Year 1) and will be kept open until 1.20pm
- 1.30pm (Year 2) and will be kept open until 1.35pm

## Unplanned Absence

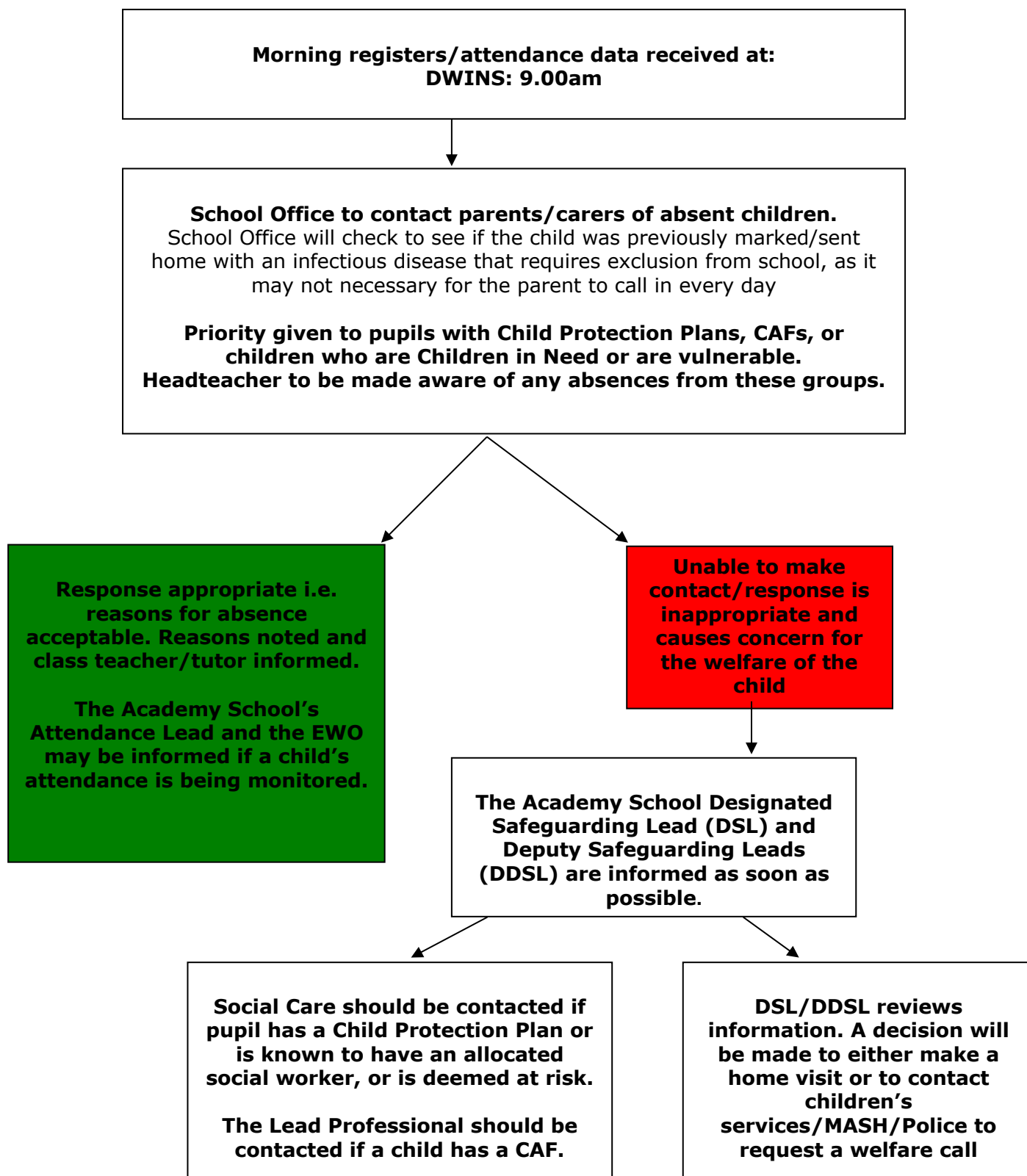
Parent/Carers must call the Academy School on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.55am or as soon as practically possible that morning or the night before.

If the Academy School have not heard from the parent/carer by 9.30am, the School Office team will check to see if the child was previously marked/sent home with an infectious disease that requires exclusion from school, as it may not be necessary for the parent to call in every day.

(Refer to [Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings](#) for further information), if this is not the case then the First Day Calling procedure must be followed (Refer to flowchart below) to ensure that the Academy School is aware of the child's whereabouts and that everyone in the household is safe.

## FIRST DAY CALLING –FLOWCHART

**'First Day Calling' is important because school absence and safeguarding are closely linked. This practice not only encourages good attendance it also helps to monitor a pupil's wellbeing and is an alert to their safety.**



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Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the Academy School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the Academy School may ask parents 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 Academy 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.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

All children must attend school on time, and be present in class registration to receive their mark for the session.

Parents/Carers are expected to ensure that their child is in school by 8.55am – main school – 8.45am and 12.45pm – Nursery

Any child arriving after this/these times but before 9.30am will be recorded as arriving late.

Any child arriving after the registers are closed will be counted as unauthorised absence for the morning session, unless there are extenuating circumstance.

(Refer to Appendix 1 for DfE Attendance Codes).

For Health & Safety reasons we must record every person who is present on the school premises. Late arrivals are regularly monitored to alert the Headteacher's attention to persistent latecomers. The Headteacher will write to those parents/carers and invite them in for a meeting. The aim is to offer support and advice and to stress the importance of being at school on time. Repeated lateness has a negative impact on the child, the teacher and others in the class. It can impede children's social and emotional development as well as academic development.

### **Following up absence**

The Headteacher will meet regularly with the admin team to review attendance data. An overview of all persistent absentees and attendance of PPG and vulnerable children is monitored on a weekly basis. The Academy School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## Communication/Reporting to parents

Parents/Carers will be updated with their child's attendance annually in their written end of year report. The Academy School will be in regular contact with parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the required time a child is expected to be in school. This will be in the form of written communication, followed up with meetings, where necessary.

A particular focus will be on persistent absentees (those below 90%) and those children subject to CP plans, CHIN plans, CAFs or are deemed as vulnerable.

Information on lateness, illness and absence are explained in the Academy School brochure. This highlights the importance of being in school on time and notifying the Academy School if their child is absent for any reason.

The importance of regular attendance and punctuality are also explained at induction meetings with new parents/carers.

Parents/Carers are also encouraged to share any worries or concerns that their child may have which may impact them not wanting to come to school.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

Under DfE guidance, Headteachers/Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

**Authorised Absences** are mornings and/or afternoons away from school with good reasons which make non-attendance unavoidable, for example:

- Illness (absence for longer than a week may require a Doctor's letter)
- Hospital or special clinic appointments - for those operating during school hours only.
- Therapy sessions e.g. speech & language, physio, occupational etc. where appointments cannot be made outside school hours.
- Medical /dental appointments for emergencies only (not check-ups).
- Extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher and in accordance with DfE guidance.
- Religious observance

All such appointments must be requested in writing, in advance, to the Headteacher.

Children must be "signed out" of school and "signed in" by Academy School staff, on return from appointments with the time of arrival/departure logged.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school **does not consider reasonable** and no leave of absence has been given. Examples of this are:

- Keeping children off school for trivial reasons such as birthdays, outings as treats, shopping trips, tiredness after parties or holidays etc.
- Because it's raining, too hot, too cold.
- Looking after siblings
- Illness of parent
- Holidays/ family holidays during term time
- Truancy
- Minding the house

**No holidays are authorised during term time.** The Academy School has a duty to ensure children are in school regularly and parents are legally obliged to ensure that their children are in school regularly.

A fixed penalty will be considered for parents/carers who take children out of school for holidays during term time and a referral sent to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer). The penalty will be that deemed appropriate by the Governing Board and/or EWO. The penalty notice can only be issued by the Local Authority.

For clarification, all leave during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Extended absences due to pupil illness will require medical authentication.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Weekly assemblies to promote good attendance – class levels of attendance are shared
- Each class has an attendance noticeboard and weekly attendance figure is noted
- Certificates to award those children at 100% or 97+% attendance (School takes into account those children with medical or health needs which impact on attendance due to regular hospital or medical appointments that are unavoidable in the school day)

### **Attendance monitoring**

- Registers are marked twice a day
- The class teachers and office staff will log reasons for absence
- Weekly attendance meetings are held between the Headteacher and Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance
- Weekly checks are made to identify children with less than 90% attendance as well as worrying patterns of absence e.g. every Monday



## **What we do when we are concerned about a child's absence**

- An initial letter of concern will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to discuss the problem in order to find ways to improve attendance
- The letter identifies if the child has fallen into the red or amber category for attendance
- The Academy School makes contact with parents to discuss concerns and ways of improving attendance. Written records are kept of outcomes of discussions
- Headteacher will hold attendance meetings with parents/carers to discuss concerns, next steps, support etc
- If after meeting with parents/carers the child's absence continues to be of concern, we will make referrals to an Education Welfare Officer to review the case

## **Fabricated or Induced illness**

All staff should be aware of what fabricated or induced illness (FII) is and the signs and symptoms to look out for, whilst this is a very rare condition, it should never be ignored.

### **What is fabricated or induced illness?**

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerated or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. In fabricated or induced illness, the parent may present the child as ill when they are healthy, deliberately induce symptoms of illness, manipulate test results, or exaggerate or lie about symptoms.

### **Indicators of fabricated or induced illness**

Some of the indicators of fabricated or induced illness, include

- The medical history doesn't make sense
- Treatment is ineffective
- The symptoms disappear when the parent/carer isn't around
- They can be seen repeatedly by different professionals looking for different things

In all cases, the child's normal life is restricted. Cases of fabricated or induced illness are very complex. Where fabricated and induced illness is suspected, referrals should be made without alerting the child's parent/carer.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Local Governing Board**

The Local Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the Academy School. This information is contained in the Headteacher's Report that presented and discussed at the board meetings on a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the Academy School, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## **The Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance**

The Admin Officer with responsibility for attendance:

- Monitors attendance data at the Academy School and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Arranges letters/calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues

## **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers also organise celebration assemblies and incentives for promoting attendance.

## **Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on Scholarpack.

Office staff are expected to undertake first day calling as a priority job every morning.

Office staff are responsible for drawing any concerns about attendance on a day-to-day basis to the Headteacher.

Office staff are responsible for notifying the Headteacher of any child who is absent who is under the care of a CP plan or is deemed a vulnerable child.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **PARENT INFORMATION**

#### **Aims**

1. To create a warm, welcoming, secure atmosphere where children feel valued
2. To provide a stimulating and accessible curriculum
3. To provide a bright, clean and attractive environment
4. To encourage children to attend every day and arrive punctually
5. To develop a positive attitude to the importance of prompt arrival and regular attendance

#### **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents and carers are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. They are also responsible for informing the Academy School of any absence on each day of absence. They should state the nature of the illness and when the child is expected to return to the Academy. When the child returns to the Academy School, a brief letter or email should be sent informing the Academy School of the reason for absence. If no reason for absence is provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the Headteacher who will follow this up with individual parents/carers.

#### **Objectives**

At the Academy School, we recognise that regular and punctual attendance is absolutely vital if children are to make sustained progress. Using the Academy School's computerised attendance system, children's attendance is carefully monitored by the Headteacher, class teachers, office staff and Admin Officer with responsibility of attendance.

Where a child's attendance gives cause for concern, the Academy School will contact the parents. If the child's attendance does not improve, the Academy School will write to the parents inviting them into school to discuss the issue. If a pattern of poor or non-attendance continues, the Academy School may inform the Educational Welfare Officer and a formal referral may be made. The Educational Welfare Officer will then pursue the issue and make parents aware of their legal responsibilities.

## **First Day Call Procedure**

**If your child is not going to be in school please call the office on 01689 857278 or email [admin@darrickwoodinfants.com](mailto:admin@darrickwoodinfants.com)**

**Please do this before 8.55am on each day of their absence.**

If we have not heard from you by **9.30am**, the office staff will contact you. If we are unable to contact you, we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence.

If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then we may make a home visit. However, if we still have not been able to get a response, consideration will be given as to whether we alert the police to carry out a home welfare check.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe.

## **Lateness**

Parents should ensure that their child is at school by 8.55am (8.45am or 12.45pm Nursery).

Once the children are settled, the class teacher marks the registers. Any child not in the classroom for registration is marked as absent. Any child arriving after the gates are closed/register has been taken must report to the office to be signed in. Any child arriving after 9.00am and before 9.30am is marked as late. Any child arriving after 9.30am continues to be marked as absent for that session. It will be marked as authorised/unauthorised absence depending on the reason for late arrival and will require a letter of explanation.

If lateness persists then parents/carers are invited into school to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the issue.

### **What we do when we are concerned about a child's absence**

- An initial letter of concern will be sent to parents/carers inviting them to discuss the problem in order to find ways to improve attendance
- Attendance support makes contact with parents/carers to discuss concerns and ways of improving attendance. Written notes are kept of outcomes of discussions
- Headteacher will hold attendance meetings with parents/carers
- Education Welfare Officer alerted and a referral made

<b>AUTHORISED ABSENCE</b>	<b>UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Illness of child</li><li>▪ Medical/dental appointments</li><li>▪ Therapy sessions (Speech &amp; Language, Physio)</li><li>▪ Family bereavement</li><li>▪ Religious observance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Minding the house</li><li>▪ Looking after brothers/sisters</li><li>▪ Shopping trips in school hours</li><li>▪ Illness of parent</li><li>▪ Day trips</li><li>▪ Family holiday</li><li>▪ Weather too hot/cold</li><li>▪ Tiredness/late night</li></ul>

### **Holidays During Term Time**

Parents are not permitted to take holidays during term time, as children are then missing valuable education time.

Under Department for Education guidance a Headteacher may only grant leave of absence **in very exceptional circumstances**.

#### **This does not include:**

- A Family Holiday;
- A surprise visit or one booked without your knowledge;
- Leave to visit relatives abroad;
- Holiday booked due to difficulties with shift work patterns or rotas.

Leave of absence during term time may be granted in the event of a **medical emergency only**. In this eventuality, details of flights or travel arrangements and when they were booked may be required before authorised absence is granted. This does not include a planned trip to coincide with cheaper flight times during term time for example, to visit a poorly relative.

For clarification, all leave during term time will be recorded as unauthorised absence and extended absences due to pupil illness will require medical authentication.

Should you need to discuss the implementation of this policy further, please contact the Academy School.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Headteacher and approved by the Local Governing Board.

### **Useful Links and Policies**

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Gov.uk - [School attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Gov.uk - [Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced](#)

[Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings](#)

### **Monitoring and Implementation**

	Name	Date
Policy written by	Headteacher	December 2021
Agreed by Committee	Local Governing Board	December 2021
Approved by Committee	Local Governing Board	January 2022
Adopted by Governing Board	Local Governing Board	February 2022
To be reviewed every two years	October 2024	

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Darrick Wood Infant & Nursery School – Attendance and First Day Calling Policy – January 2022



## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

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<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (Covid-19) or not required in school	For the school year 2021-2022, a new category for recording instances when a pupil is not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (Covid-19) OR for non-compulsory school age children not expected to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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