

School Attendance Policy St. George's Primary School

Policy reviewed and adopted by the Board of Trustees

Autumn Term 1 2024

Version

V3

Date of next review:

Autumn Term 1 2025

Responsible Committee:

Local Governing Body

Monitoring:

Trust Board

Related Policies

**Behaviour Policy
Safeguarding Policy**

Where is this policy published?

School Websites

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 Policy at a glance | 2 |
| 2 Introduction | 3 |
| 3 Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance | 3 |
| 3.1 Expectations | 3 |
| 3.2 Celebrating good and improved attendance | 4 |
| 3.3 Pupils joining the school | 4 |
| 4 Roles and Responsibilities | 4 |
| 4.1 The Trust Development Team and Trust Board | 4 |
| 4.2 The Local Governing Body (LGB) | 4 |
| 4.3 The Headteacher | 5 |
| 4.4 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (the 'Attendance Champion') | 5 |
| 4.5 Attendance Staff | 5 |
| 4.6 Teachers | 5 |
| 4.7 Parents/Carers | 5 |
| 4.8 Pupils | 6 |
| 5 How we will work together to strengthen school attendance | 6 |
| 5.1 Giving regular attendance updates | 6 |
| 5.2 Seeking to remove barriers to attendance | 6 |
| 6 Recording Attendance | 7 |
| 6.1 Attendance register | 7 |
| 6.2 Unplanned Absence | 7 |
| 6.4 Lateness and Punctuality | 8 |
| 6.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence | 8 |
| 7 Planned Absence - medical/dental | 8 |
| 8 Requesting leave of absence (exceptional circumstances) | 9 |
| 9 Formal attendance support and legal sanctions | 9 |
| 10 Attendance Monitoring - Procedure | 10 |
| 10.1 Monitoring Attendance | 10 |
| 10.2 Analysing Attendance | 10 |
| 10.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance | 10 |
| 10.4 Working with other schools, the Local Authority and the Department for Education (DfE) | 11 |
| Appendix 1 Attendance Matters and Attendance Diamond | 12 |
| Appendix 2: Attendance Codes | 14 |

1 Policy at a glance

- 1.1 It is the right of every pupil to receive a good education. The school is committed to making sure that this happens and will do all that it can to promote good attendance.
- 1.2 It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- 1.3 The school actively promotes 100% attendance as there is a direct link between regular attendance at school and academic achievement. Every day missed lowers the chance of a pupil making the progress of which they are capable.
- 1.4 Securing regular attendance can sometimes be challenging for parents/carers and we realise that working in partnership with parents/carers will ensure that school days are not missed. This will be achieved by the school forming strong and supportive relationships with parents.
- 1.5 This policy should not be viewed in isolation but sits alongside policies on Safeguarding, Behaviour and SEND as well as our work to support disadvantaged pupils.
- 1.6 The school will work in close partnership with parents/carers and pupils to improve attendance by:
 - Being clear about **expectations** for regular high attendance;
 - **Monitor** attendance data and share this so that early support can be given, and all can work together to resolve issues before they become entrenched;
 - **Listen and understand** the barriers to attendance and seek agreement on how all parties can resolve them;
 - **Facilitate support** from within the school and from outside specialists to remove barriers to regular attendance;
 - **Formalise support** so that all parties are clear on who is doing what;
 - Where all else fails to **enforce** attendance through statutory intervention such as attendance contracts, Education supervision orders, and, as a last resort, a penalty notice in line with the National Framework.
- 1.7 Headteachers may authorise term time absence at their discretion for exceptional circumstances, but this does not include holidays.
- 1.8 The school will make special arrangements for pupils with medical needs and in other circumstances where absence is planned and agreed.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 Prior to final approval by the Local Governing Body, this policy has been considered by Trustees, and has been the subject of review by Thrive staff, including school staff, and suggested amendments have been taken into consideration and changes made where they can be agreed.
- 2.2 This policy meets the requirements of *Working together to improve school attendance* (Department for Education (DfE) August 2024) and the legislation that sets 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;
 - National Framework for Penalty Notices.
- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 aims to ensure that people have equality of opportunity in accessing and experiencing public services. When carrying out its work, the school has regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations across all characteristics. The school does not discriminate against pupils due to their disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Protection is extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment. This policy was reviewed and updated with reference to this duty. The author/s of this document considered this policy in the light of these requirements to ensure adherence to these statutory regulations.

3 Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

3.1 Expectations

There is a direct link between good attendance and doing well at school. At Key Stage 2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% for those who met this standard.¹

| School expectation | Primary School |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 'Good' Attendance | 96% and above |
| Attendance Concern | Between 90%-96% |
| Serious Concern/'Persistent Absence' | Below 90% |
| Severe Absence | Below 50% |

¹ *Working together to improve school attendance*, Department for Education, August 2024.

| School expectation | Secondary School |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 'Good' Attendance | 95% and above |
| Attendance Concern | Between 90%-95% |
| Serious Concern/'Persistent Absence' | Below 90% |
| Severe Absence | Below 50% |

3.2 Celebrating good and improved attendance

In our aim to celebrate and reward good and improved attendance, we use a number of initiatives, including:

- Regular rewards for 100% weekly attendance;
- Half-termly rewards for Focus Groups with the highest attendance;
- "Well Done" SMS messages for students with notable attendance improvements;
- "Well Done" SMS messages for students with sustained high attendance;
- Lucky draw spot prizes for students with 100% attendance for the year-to-date;
- Termly Attendance draws for prizes such as Family Goody Bags and vouchers;
- End of Year Award for students with consistently high and improved attendance.

3.3 Pupils joining the school

Please note:

- We always meet the child before admitting them onto the school roll;
- New admissions are added to Arbor (the school database) in the pre-admissions intake section;
- A child will only be enrolled and assigned to a registration form once they have arrived at the school and are attending.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Trust Development Team and Trust Board

The Trust is responsible for:

- Liaising with the Local Authority, gaining guidance and support for any new initiatives and legal sanctions;
- Supporting, guiding and challenging the school;
- Quality assuring processes for improving attendance across schools.

4.2 The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- Reviewing and challenging attendance data;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Link Governor for Inclusion, incorporating attendance, is Catherine McWilliams.

4.3 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school;
- Monitoring the work of the senior leader responsible for attendance;
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the LGB;
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils;
- Monitoring the impact of any attendance strategies;
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

4.4 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance (the 'Attendance Champion')

The school's designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Louise Oddy who can be contacted via the School Office.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is responsible for:

- Monitoring the work of the attendance team;
- Monitoring pupil-level attendance data and reporting it to the Headteacher;
- Overseeing targeted intervention and support to pupils and families;
- Ensuring all members of staff are focused on improving attendance;
- Evaluating and monitoring attendance processes;
- Ensuring that parents/carers are informed about any attendance issues at an early stage;
- Ensuring that parents/carers feel that they are supported to be equal partners in finding ways to overcome barriers to attendance.

4.5 Attendance Staff

The school has dedicated attendance staff responsible for:

- Receiving calls from parents/carers each day regarding absence and record it on the school system;
- Making calls and contacting parents/carers to ensure attendance at school and offer support;
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data;
- Identifying areas of focus for improvement;
- Providing regular attendance reports and reporting concerns to the designated senior leader and/or the Headteacher;
- Working in partnership with parents to find ways to overcome barriers to good attendance;
- Advising the Headteacher when to refer to the Local Authority to seek the issuing of fixed-penalty notices.

The staff member parents can contact is Michelle Mitchell, Attendance Lead who can be reached on 01482 351013, mitchellm@thrivetrust.uk.

4.6 Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance correctly each lesson of the day via the attendance register. The marking of registers is a legal requirement.

4.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Making sure their child attends every day, on time;

- Calling the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, advising when a return to school is expected;
- Providing more than one emergency contact number;
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day;
- Actively seeking support from school staff to secure regular attendance, and raise any issues as early as possible;
- Working with school staff to find ways of overcoming barriers to good attendance.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time;
- Use all support available to them in school to secure regular attendance;
- Raise any concerns that may become a barrier to attendance.

5 How we will work together to strengthen school attendance

5.1 Giving regular attendance updates

The school will;

- Call parents/carers on the first day of absence;
- Raise any attendance issue as soon as it arises;
- Inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence via a written report every year.

5.2 Seeking to remove barriers to attendance

The school will:

- Invite parents to speak with members of staff to find ways to remove barriers to attendance;
- Where absence has become an issue create a support package that may include: Pick-up and drop-off;
 - Individual incentives and rewards;
 - Wellness action plan;
 - ATTEND framework to actively listen to pupils' and parents' concerns and draw up an attendance contract;
 - Opportunities for informal conversations with key members of staff;
 - Wellbeing support
 - Pastoral and restorative support;
 - Home visits to discuss support schools can offer;
 - School nurse support;
 - Short-term adaptations to school timings;
 - Signpost/provide access to wider support services;
 - Referral to support services and other agencies.
- Work with parents to avoid statutory legal processes such as fixed penalty notices.

6 Recording Attendance

6.1 Attendance register

6.1.1 The school maintains an attendance register of all pupils.

6.1.2 We take our register at the start of the morning session and the afternoon session.

6.1.3 The start of the morning session is 8:45, and the start of the afternoon session is 12:30 (EYFS and KS1) 12:40 (KS2)..

6.1.4 The register will close 30 minutes after the start of the session times given in 6.1.3. Pupils should still attend school if they cannot arrive before the register closes and they will be given a late mark (U, unauthorised absence).

6.1.5 The register will mark whether every pupil is present or absent. A full list of these registration codes is given in appendix 2.

6.1.6 Any amendment to the attendance register includes:

- 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.

6.1.7 The register also records:

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

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

6.2 Unplanned Absence

6.2.1 The pupil's parent/carer must let the school know the reason for any absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as possible using:

- Phone 01482 351013;
- Visiting the school and leaving a message with a receptionist;
- Emailing Michelle Mitchell on mitchellm@thrivetrust.uk
- In-app messages (Arbor).

6.2.2 Parents will be contacted via phone call, text and in-app message (Arbor) should a valid reason for absence not be received.

6.2.3 We will mark absence due to illness as **authorised** unless the school has a genuine concern about the reason given. The school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription or appointment card. We will never ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school deems it appropriate then the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** and parents/carers will be notified of this.

6.4 Lateness and Punctuality

6.4.1 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;

6.4.2 Ongoing punctuality issues are dealt with by Late Detentions, punctuality reports and meetings with parents/carers.

6.5 Following Up Unexplained Absence

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

- Contact the 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 will make a visit to the home;
- Establish whether the absence is approved or not;
- Use the correct attendance code and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained - this will be no later than five 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.

7 Planned Absence - medical/dental

7.1 Parents/carers should get the school's agreement in advance of any planned absence, including medical or dental appointments which will be counted as an authorised absence.

7.2 We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should return to school as soon as possible after their appointment.

7.3 If a pupil attends school and leaves for a medical or dental appointment part way through the session they will not be marked as absent.

7.4 Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases. Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, the school may seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision for the pupil in line with its policy.

7.5 The school will not routinely expect parents/carers to provide medical evidence to support illness absences. The school will only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where clarification is needed to accurately record absence in the attendance register. In the majority of cases a parent/carer's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern.

7.6 Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, the school will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will speak to the family about what evidence is available. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school will have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

8 Requesting leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)

- 8.1 Parents/carers should write to the Headteacher in advance, requesting approval for any leave of absence. The parent should state the full circumstances of the request and explain why the absence cannot be taken out of school time.
- 8.2 The Headteacher will consider any request and may request supporting evidence to be given.
- 8.3 All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:
- Attending an interview;
 - Study leave;
 - A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable;
 - Religious observance;
 - Exceptional circumstances (see 8.1).
- 8.4 A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances can be granted by the Headteacher at their discretion. The headteacher will consider the particular circumstances of the request. If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted the headteacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from the school.
- 8.5 The school does not consider a need or desire for a holiday to be an exceptional circumstance.
- 8.6 The school cannot grant a leave of absence for a pupil to take part in protest activity.

9 Formal attendance support and legal sanctions

- 9.1 Where informal support (see section 5) is not resulting in improved attendance the school is obliged to seek a legal intervention. There are a number of options available to the school at this stage including:
- Drawing up an *attendance contract*;
 - Drawing up an *education supervision order*;
 - Seeking prosecution.
- 9.2 In seeking prosecution the school applies to the Local Authority who will decide whether to prosecute or not. If they decide to prosecute they will prepare a case for a court hearing.
- 9.3 The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice to the Local Authority may take into account:
- The number of unauthorised absences occurring in a rolling academic year;
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as a holiday taken in term-time without permission;
 - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
- 9.4 If the court finds the case to be proven then a penalty notice will be issued. Penalty notices are issued per child, per parent. The first penalty notice in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- 9.5 A second penalty notice in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

9.6 The payment of any penalty notice is made to the Local Authority, not the school.

10 Attendance Monitoring - Procedure

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data, this helps identify pupils that require support with their attendance. We always aim to work with and include parents/carers in all supportive processes.

10.1 Monitoring Attendance

10.1.1 The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data 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;
- Identify whether attendance patterns may occur in a student's weekly attendance.

10.1.2 Pupil-level absence data is collected and published 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 LGB and the Trust Board.

10.1.3 The school's attendance data is shared with the DfE daily.

10.2 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.

10.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

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

10.4 Working with other schools, the Local Authority and the Department for Education (DfE)

10.4.1 The school works with other schools within Thrive to improve its support for achieving good attendance and managing poor attendance. The school compares its data with other schools nationally via the DfE's *View your education data* website.

10.4.2 The school attends regular attendance panels of the Local Authority and is held to account.

Attendance Matters

ATTENDANCE DAYS MISSED LESSONS MISSED

100%

0 DAYS

0 LESSONS MISSED

99%

1 DAY

5 LESSONS MISSED

98%

3 DAYS

15 LESSONS MISSED

97%

1 WEEK

25 LESSONS MISSED

96%

1.5 WEEK

37.5 LESSONS MISSED

94%

2 WEEKS

50 LESSONS MISSED

93%

2.5 WEEKS

62.5 LESSONS MISSED

92%

3 WEEKS

75 LESSONS MISSED

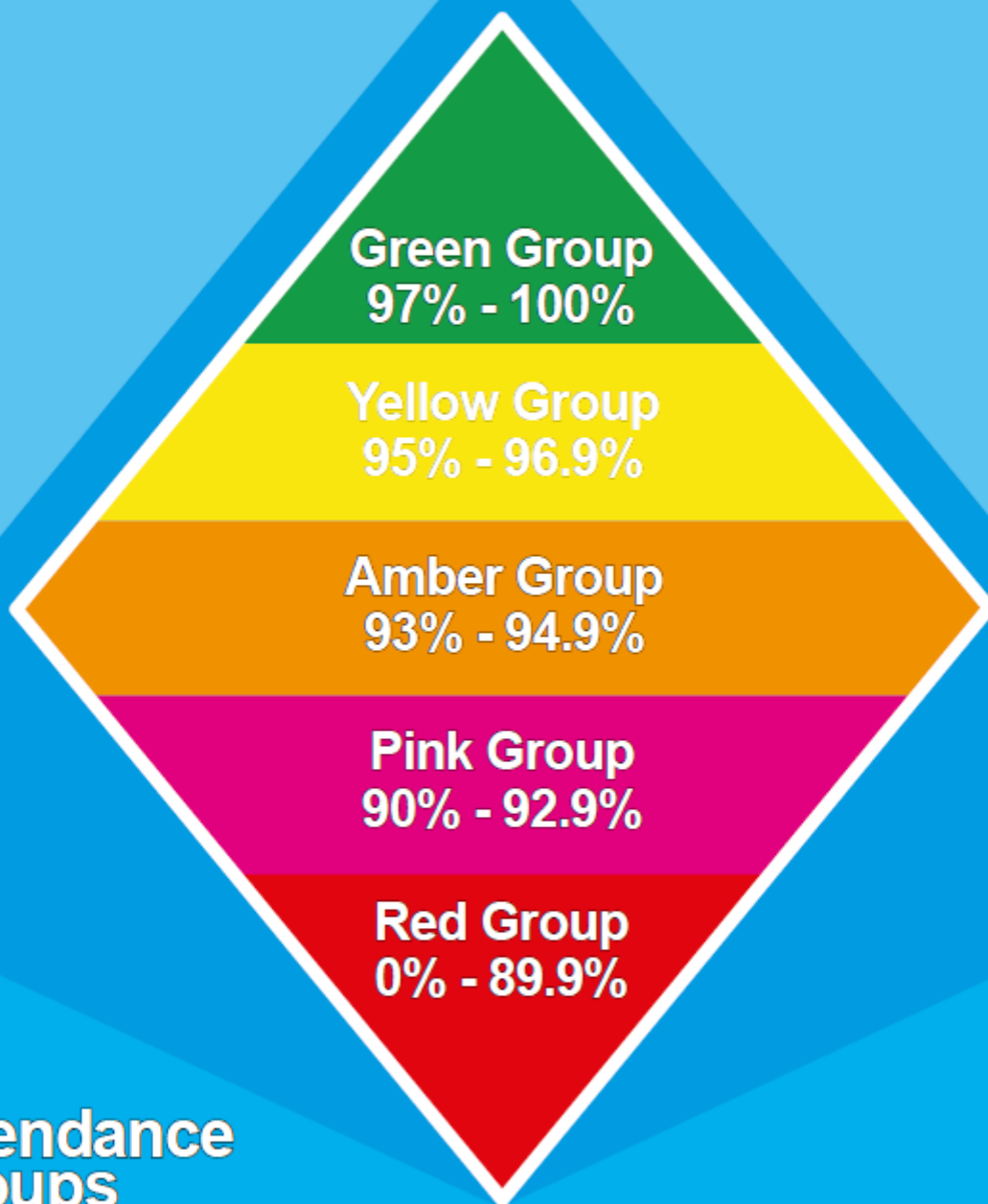
90%

3.5 WEEKS

82.5 LESSONS MISSED

**Maximise your potential.
Attend School every day.**

Attendance Diamond



Attendance Groups

| | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| GREEN | BEST CHANCE OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS |
| YELLOW | RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT |
| AMBER | SERIOUS RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT |
| PINK | SEVERE RISK OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT |
| RED | EXTREME RISK - PERSISTENT ABSENTEE |

Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

| Code | Full name | Description |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Present Codes | | |
| / or \ | Present am or pm | Present in school during registration. |
| L | Late | Late arrival before the register has closed |
| B | Educated off Site | The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school. |
| K | Education provision provided by LA | Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school |
| P | Sporting Activity (Approved) | Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. |
| V | Educational trip | A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation. |
| W | Work Experience | A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience. |
| Absent Codes - Authorised | | |
| C1 | Other Authorised Absence | Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad |
| J1 | Interview | Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution |
| C2 | Other Authorised Absence | Pupils on part-time timetables |
| E | Excluded | If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion. |
| M | Medical/Dental Appointments | The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours. |
| R | Religious Observance | The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body. |
| S | Study Leave | Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise. |
| T | Traveller Absence | Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school. |
| I | Illness | This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness. |
| I01 | Illness | This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments. |
| I02 | Confirmed case of Covid-19 | This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus. |
| Absent Codes - Unauthorised | | |
| G | Family Holiday (Not Agreed) | The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher. |
| N | No Reason | The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O. |
| O | Unauthorised Absence | If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised. |
| U | Late (After Register Closes) | Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U. |
| Other Codes | | |
| D | Dual Registration | The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school. |
| X | Non-statutory school age absence | Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. |
| Y1 | Unable to attend | Absence due to transport normally provided not being available. |
| Y2 | Unable to attend | Widespread disruption to travel |

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| Y3 | Unable to attend | Part of school closed. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend | Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures). |
| Y5 | Unable to attend | Pupils in the criminal justice system. |
| Y6 | Unable to attend | Absence due to public health guidance or law. |
| Y7 | Unable to attend | Any other unavoidable cause. |
| Z | Pupil Not On Roll | This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school. |
| # | School Closed To Pupils | This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station. |