

## **DfE Guidance**

New Attendance and absence codes September 24/25

### **Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed**

The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is marked N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to mark them as absent using code U or another absence code that is more appropriate.

### **Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority**

#### **Code P: Participating in a sporting activity**

298. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

299. A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if:

- the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;
- the activity is of an educational nature;
- the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and
- the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.

#### **Code W: Attending work experience**

303. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education. The work experience must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

#### **Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity**

307. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

310. Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have

in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

311. As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education', pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.

### **Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment**

321. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

322. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant leave of absence for this under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they

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will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence), and the school is satisfied that, based on the individual facts of the case, there are exceptional circumstances which justify the leave.

323. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.

324. If a pupil is present at registration but then leaves the school to attend a medical or dental appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.

### **Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution**

### **Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination**

330. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(5), for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

### **Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school**

334. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(7) or (8) for a pupil not of

### **Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time Timetable**

340. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a

temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 67 – 341. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant a leave of absence, under regulation 11(6) to temporarily reduce the timetable of a pupil of compulsory school age to part-time, if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will, during the period of temporary part-time education, be expected to attend the school.

342. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because they are subject to a part-time timetable in line with an agreement between the school and a parent the pupil normally lives with that the pupil should temporarily be educated part-time.

343. Where a pupil is receiving a full-time education, but only part-time at the school in question (e.g. dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision or flexischooling) this code must not be used and the appropriate code for why the pupil is not in school for that session should be used.

### **Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance**

344. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence should not, and from school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority, must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

345. Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

346. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant such a leave of absence under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

347. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

348. Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record where a pupil is absent with leave for a reason that is not covered by another leave of absence code.

### **Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes**

351. The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

### **Code R: Religious observance**

357. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).

358. As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

359. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.

### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)**

362. The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.

363. Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register – i.e. making a decision that code I is the absence code that accurately describes the reason the pupil is not in school for the session in question. In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.

364. Where medical evidence is deemed necessary, school should not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and should speak to the family about what evidence is available.

Schools should be mindful that requesting additional medical evidence unnecessarily places pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointment system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Where a parent cannot provide evidence in the form requested but can provide other evidence, schools should take this into account. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence the school should have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may in itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

### **Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made**

366. The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.

### **Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements**

369. The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so.

**Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available**

371. The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.

**Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel**

374. The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.

375. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

**Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**

376. Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.

**Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed**

378. Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.

379. This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays.

380. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

**Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention****Relevant regulation**

381. The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:

- in police detention,
- remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
- detained under a sentence of detention.

382. If a pupil is remanded to local authority accommodation, they should attend school as normal where possible and where it is not possible any absence should be recorded using the appropriate code.

383. A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day.

**Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**

386. The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:

- contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the

**Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause**

387. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school.

388. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable causes.

389. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6)).

### **Code G: Holiday not granted by the school**

391. The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.

392. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.

393. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet established**

394. Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N.

395. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)).

Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O.

### **Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances**

397. Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified

### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

399. Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.

400. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 Minutes.

### **Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register**

402. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease

administration burdens.

**Code #: Planned whole school closure**

407. Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:

- days between terms;
- half terms;
- occasional days (for example, bank holidays);
- weekends (where it is required by the management information system);
- up to 5 non-educational days; and
- use of the whole school as a polling station.