



At Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School, we have the following core values: **Kind, Independent, Inclusive, Resilient, Creative and Knowledgeable**. Our children know and understand what each word means and every child at Spring Meadow works hard to achieve each value at all times.

Kind- For everyone to show kindness as they work, play, and learn. Everyone is treated with mutual respect.

Independent- To be independent learners who take responsibility for themselves. The school provides an environment that enables them to make decisions and choices to reach their full potential.

Inclusive- To include everyone in our school and wider community and to embrace and celebrate everyone's individual special qualities.

Resilient- Everyone is resilient to take risks, try new things, and learn from their mistakes.

Creative- As a school, we nurture an environment where there is the freedom to express individual ideas, use our imagination, and be inspired to be creative across the curriculum.

Knowledgeable- To be knowledgeable about the community and the world around us. The children build on their previous knowledge. The curriculum is delivered using approaches that enable the children to know more and remember more.



At St Mary's we champion every child to be the **best that they can be**. Our knowledge-led curriculum therefore endeavours to develop our children's **character, core skills, creativity** and sense of **community**.

Supported by our school's vision, ethos and position as a junior school, we believe that our specialist knowledge of the Key Stage 2 age range ensures **improving outcomes, opportunities and experiences for all our children**. To achieve this, we are aspirational for our pupils, instilling high expectations, the passion, perseverance and stamina to succeed.

Attendance Policy

Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School and Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School

Last reviewed on:

24.07.24 by Rachel Clarke (Headteacher at Ely St Mary's) & Hannah Vitacolonna (Office Coordinator) and Laura Fielding (Headteacher at Spring Meadow)

Key Updates: New DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19 August 2024)
Added new attendance codes

Reviewed and changed wording regarding penalty notices and legal action as per the newly issued DfE Statutory Guidance

Appendix A – Three Letter System Thresholds - removed

Modifications reviewed and approved by LGB on: 12.07.23

27.06.23 by Rachel Clarke (Headteacher at Ely St Mary's) & Hannah Vitacolonna (Office Coordinator) and Laura Fielding (Headteacher at Spring Meadow)

Key Updates:

Changed to include Spring Meadow Infants and Nursery School

Reviewed and changed wording regarding penalty notice and prosecution for term time absence. Appendix (term time leave form) also updated.

Added Appendix H: Attendance Codes which includes guidance for absences relating to Traveller families

Next review due by:

This attendance policy will be reviewed in July 2025 or following any further updates from the Local Authority / DfE.

Principles

As a school, we realise that for a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. An ethos of high levels of attendance and punctuality is recognised and valued across our whole school community. We aim to work with parents/carers to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the absence is unavoidable. We expect that all children will achieve 100% attendance but recognise that there may be exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, or absences relating to persistent health issues. Our policy applies to all children, including Reception-aged children, to promote good attendance habits from an early age.

The following guidance has been taken into consideration when developing this policy: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance. August 2024.](#)

Our attendance policy aims to:

- Support children and their parents/carers to have the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer.
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities.

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

The school has a safeguarding duty of care to all its pupils. We take the role of ensuring a child's good attendance as part of our safeguarding duties.

Expectations:

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school prepared for the school day, punctually and in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide supporting information from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested. Where possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours.
- Ensure that they contact the school before 9:00am if their child is unable to attend school, citing the reason.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an exceptional circumstance. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a penalty notice/fine.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details, and ensure school has more than one name, address and telephone number as an emergency contact.
- Engage with early interventions designed to support the family and their child's attendance at school.
- Discuss attendance where necessary face to face or on the telephone – conversations are preferable to messages or emails.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (the term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

We expect that school will:

- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, information from a GP or other relevant body may be requested to assist school in offering appropriate support.
- Promote and celebrate good attendance and punctuality, for example through assemblies, social media, displays and parent/carer communications.
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Provide intensive and bespoke support to children at risk of persistent absence.
- Work alongside other services and teams to support children's attendance. E.g. other schools in a multi academy trust, the Local Authority, Early Help, Social Care, Virtual School and the local community (including volunteers).
- Share attendance data with parents/carers and make it clear what good attendance and success looks like for their child.
- Communicate clearly and consistently with parents/carers and children regarding attendance.
- Follow the Local Authority Medical Needs Policy for children who are failing to access education in school due to medical and behavioural needs. This goes hand in hand with Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- Consider an Individual Healthcare Plan for children with medical needs.
- Work alongside the Access and Inclusion team to identify and support children with medical needs preventing them from attending school.

The Attendance Champion for Ely St Mary's Junior School is Rachel Clarke (Headteacher) and Rebecca Gilpin-Davies (Assistant Head). They are members of the Senior Leadership Team and can be contacted on 01353 662163. The Attendance Champion for Spring Meadow Infants and Nursery School is Laura Fielding (Headteacher). She is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and can be contacted on 01353 664742.

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Headteacher having overall responsibility for the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and/or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

We expect that all children will:

- Attend school every day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that governors will:

- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

We expect that the Local Authority will:

- Provide support, information and guidance to school by having regular meetings to discuss attendance.
- Act as a partner with school to support in some cases of persistent absence.
- Work with schools in the enforcement of penalty notices, fines and prosecutions in cases that require legal involvement.
- Identify suitable provision and reasonable adjustments for pupils unable to access education due to prolonged ill health.

School Attendance Strategy

Ely St Mary's Junior School:

Whilst Rachel Clarke (Headteacher) and Rebecca Gilpin-Davies (Assistant Head) are our Senior Attendance Champions, for day-to-day aspects of attendance, please contact our Attendance Officer, Hannah Vitacolonna on 01353 662163 / office@esm.school.

Spring Meadow Infants and Nursery School:

Whilst Laura Fielding is our Senior Attendance Champion, for day-to-day aspects of attendance, please contact our Attendance Officer, Emily Collen on 01353 664742 / office@springmeadow.cambs.sch.uk.

We are responsible for all children's attendance at school, and we partner with other agencies to help us do this. For children who might need extra support to maintain their attendance e.g. Young Carers, we signpost families to appropriate places to reduce the impact that their needs and personal circumstances have on their attendance at school. Safeguarding and attendance are closely linked, and we work together with Social Care to identify where children need extra support. We will work with families in many different ways to overcome barriers to attendance. All staff have direct access to our trained Designated Safeguarding Lead, and this is important for this work.

School is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance data and using this to inform how we support pupils. We share this data within the school staff to ensure continuity of support. We are required to report our attendance to the Department for Education (DfE) so that we can compare our performance with that of other schools, both locally and nationally. Attendance data is analysed regularly, and children whose attendance is falling or deemed to be a concern will be noted. This will be communicated with parents and carers. Support will then be put in place. Children whose attendance falls to 90% or under are deemed to be 'persistently absent' and can be referred to the Local Authority for enforcement action. Pupils whose attendance is 50% or under are 'severely persistently absent' and parents/carers will be expected to engage in substantial support.

We have a whole-school ethos of promoting and celebrating attendance. This means that we train every staff member in attendance procedures so that everyone understands the processes for attendance and the pastoral structures in school. We train, remind and support all staff to follow this policy, and constantly refer to it. Good attendance is celebrated with children and families and reported to parents/carers at Parents Evenings and in formal written end-of-year reports.

Our whole-school strategy for attendance involves deciding how to allocate resources (both financial and staffing) to manage attendance. Our support and early interventions for attendance are regularly monitored to ensure they are having an impact and are worth the resources allocated to them.

Supporting Attendance

As a school, we aim to work collaboratively with parents/carers to improve school attendance. This means that we will **listen, empathise and support with attendance. However, if this is unsuccessful, legal sanctions will be considered where appropriate.**



When required, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a Penalty Notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

Lateness and attendance are monitored daily by the **school attendance officer** who will:

- Scrutinise the registers daily, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if the reason is unknown.
- Raise concerns with parents/carers once attendance has fallen below an acceptable level.
- Offer support or signpost to other areas of support within the community.

- Our early intervention process and **Attendance Contract Pathway** consists of:
 - Step One. Telephone call or face to face conversation advising parent/carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child's attendance/lateness, and offering support. We aim to establish and maintain relationships with pupils and their families to prevent absence and promote good attendance.
 - Step Two. Send a letter to offer support and further explain the effect the absence/lateness is having on the child. Discussions and meetings will be offered to identify if early support or reasonable adjustments are needed.
 - Step Three. Send an invitation to attend a meeting to enter into an Attendance Contract. This is a supportive meeting, entered into voluntarily to discuss the needs of a pupil and family and identify ways that barriers to attendance can be removed. This is a 3-6 month plan to support pupils and families to improve attendance. Achievable and individualised targets will be mutually agreed and set. These targets will then be reviewed regularly. School will also collaborate with medical professionals to seek their advice and guidance.
 - Step Four. Should the Attendance Contract fail to improve attendance, or should there be no engagement with interventions and support despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for children of statutory school age.
 - At Step 3 or 4, school might consider using a **Notice To Improve letter**, a strategy used in partnership with the Local Authority to set targets for improved attendance. This is a final attempt to improve attendance when parents/carers are failing to engage with support being offered by school, before referring parents for legal sanctions.

- Following use of one of the two pathways above, if attendance does not improve, school will refer to the Local Authority for legal sanctions.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance/lateness.
- Monitor pupil attendance within specific and identified groups.
- Monitor and respond to pupil absences for those with additional medical needs.
- Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils who are 'Children Missing in Education'.
- Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to home educate their child.

- Follow statutory procedures when deleting a pupil from roll.
- Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
- Reporting pupils to the Local Authority when they have 10 consecutive 'O' coded (unauthorised absence) sessions in school.
- Report pupils with unauthorised term-term leave absences (10 consecutive sessions of 'G' codes) to the Local Authority for issuing of a legal sanction to parents/carers.
- Report pupils with 15 consecutive days of 'I' (illness) codes to the Local Authority.

Registration

Reception to Year 6:

Ely St Mary's Junior School:

- The classroom door is opened at 8:40 am.
- All external classroom doors/ gates are closed at 8:50 am.
- Once the external classroom door has been closed, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at 8:40am and close at 9:20 am. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9:20 am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Spring Meadow Infants and Nursery School:

- The classroom door is opened at 8:45am.
- All external classroom doors are locked at 8:55am.
- Once the external classroom door has been closed, entry to the school is via the main entrance.
- Registers are open at 8:45am and close at 9:20am. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 9:20am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for three years as a record.

Lateness

When children arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other children's learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practise key learning skills. Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Team for pupils who are of statutory school age.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 9:00 am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the office or classroom staff will attempt to make contact with the parent/carers once the registers have closed at 9:20 am.

The member of staff will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on the pupil's electronic school record. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes (see Appendix G).

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.

If school have not heard or been able to contact anyone regarding the absence by 10.30am, we may decide it is necessary to conduct a home visit (see Appendix D) to establish the safety and wellbeing of a child who is absent without explanation from a parent/carer.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting information may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a text message which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment.

Illness

Children who are unable to attend school due to sickness and / or diarrhoea (a stomach upset) can return after they have been 48 hours clear in line with NHS Guidelines.

If your child has experienced one episode of vomiting due to eating too much / excessive exercise, they will be able to return to school once they have eaten again and are able to keep food down. Please liaise with the Office Team for guidance on this if you are not sure.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezes and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and they are well enough to return to school. We expect children to attempt to come to school unless they are too unwell to complete basic tasks. We will contact you if they need to return home.

Medical Needs and SEND

When children are prevented from accessing school due to physical or mental ill health, school will try to identify the barriers these pupils face, and use our tiered approach to supporting medical needs. This starts with the universal offer of support for all children and leads to higher tiers of need where increasingly specialist support is required. We will consider reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements. We will liaise with appropriate services to ascertain support, in the rare instances that a pupil is unable to access any education inside the school setting. We will work with the Local Authority Access and Inclusion Team to identify available options for education. Where a pupil's health needs mean they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, we may seek medical information to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision. This may take a variety of forms, which we will discuss with parents/carers on an individual basis.

Where children have an EHCP, we will liaise closely with the child's SEN Caseworker to work towards the best attendance outcomes for the child.

We are able to make adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments must be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with, the pupil and their parents/carers.

Definitions of Leave

We expect attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as:

- Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.
- Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to.
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the parent/carers, such as:

- Shopping, hair appointments, visiting family, taking part in a protest or birthdays.
- There has been no reason provided by the parent/carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Coding is always at the Headteacher's discretion.

Term-Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form (Appendix C) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If the school suspect term-time leave has been taken but the parents/carers have not completed a Term-Time Leave Request Form, we will write to the parents/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstances (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis. Examples of requests for leave of absence that **do not** meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and **will not** be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice fine/prosecution for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad.
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term.
- Trip of a lifetime.
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates.
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance.
- Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.

Penalty Notices

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160

if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child.

For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Children Missing in Education

If a pupil fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days, without explanation, the school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority as a Child Missing in Education. After a further 10 days of absence with no explanation, your child is at risk of losing their school place with us.

Elective Home Education

It is a parent's right to be able to withdraw their child from school to educate them at home if they wish to. There are legal responsibilities parents/carers must fulfil if they wish to educate their child at home, which are monitored by the Local Authority. Please speak to the headteacher in the first instance if you are considering this option.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Cambridgeshire Medical Protocol
- Appendix B – Cambridgeshire School Attendance Information for Parents
- Appendix C – Ely St Mary's and Spring Meadow Pupil Absence Request Form
- Appendix D – Ely St Mary's and Spring Meadow Home Visit Protocol (Safe & Well Checks)
- Appendix E – Ely St Mary's End of Day Hand Over Procedures to Parent/Carer/Adult
- Appendix F – Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School End of Day Hand Over Procedures to Parent/Carer/Adult
- Appendix G – Attendance Codes (abbreviated) as cited in Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities Published: 29 February 2024 Applies from: 19 August 2024
- Appendix H - Examples of absence letters:

Appendix A – Cambridgeshire Medical Protocol

AWAITING UPDATE FROM CAMBS

Appendix B – Cambridgeshire School Attendance Information for Parents

AWAITING UPDATE FROM CAMBS

Appendix C – Ely St Mary’s and Spring Meadow Pupil Absence Request Form

BEFORE READING AND COMPLETING THIS PAGE, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE READ PAGE 1.



TERM TIME LEAVE - ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

To: *The Headteacher*

I wish to apply for Term Time Leave Absence from School

Child's name Class

Child's name Class

Date from Date to(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s):

Address:
.....

Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

I understand that I may be required to attend a meeting with the Headteacher.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

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To: _____ and _____ (Names of Parents/Carers)

(This portion to be copied and returned by post to parents/carers)

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable.

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class.....

fromto (Inclusive)

Absence authorised Absence unauthorised

Current attendance % as of/...../20.....

Signed(Headteacher) Date.....

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.



AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME



IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below before completing the form.

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion for headteachers agreeing to term-time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted before the leave is taken. Parents must complete a Term-Time Leave Request Form (Appendix C) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day.

If a pupil takes unauthorised term-time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a Penalty Notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £160 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term-time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child. For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before a school can authorise any such requests, it must satisfy itself that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illness or a medical appointment. There is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending on where the 	<p>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad. • Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term. • Trip of a lifetime.
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<p>appointment falls within the school day and the health of the pupil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious Observance - only day(s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to. • The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates. • Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad. • Relatives coming to visit. • Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if it does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance. • Leave taken due to potential travel disruption.
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Please contact your child's headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

The law requires parents to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

Appendix D – Ely St Mary's and Spring Meadow Home Visit Protocol (Safe & Well Checks)

1. Purpose

- Visits to families in their homes are necessary in order to provide relevant support and/or advice regarding attendance, school and welfare issues.
- Home visits should normally be pre-arranged, however for the purposes of promoting attendance and ensuring pupil safety, unannounced “**safe and well**” visits will also be necessary at times – see attendance policy.

1. Conducting the visit

When conducting a home visit staff should:

- Notify a member of SLT first, signing out/in at the office.
- Home visits should be conducted in pairs unless agreed with a Senior Leadership member of staff prior to visiting (e.g. an exceptional circumstance may be delivering an item to the door step)
- Before setting out for the home visit, consider any risks to be discussed and addressed in advance (e.g. parental aggression, dogs/animals, known criminal activity, police have advised extra caution etc). If in doubt, do not enter the house when making a safe and well check.
- Be mindful of where their vehicle is parked i.e. park in a manner that allows ease of escape with the car facing in the direction of exit.
- Carry a mobile phone in order to be contacted or make contact in the event of an emergency;
- Carry their identification card and ensure this is shown prior to entering the house;
- If the parent/carer is not present and the child is alone, do not enter the house. If the child being alone is a concern (e.g. due to age or circumstances), this should be recorded and followed up in line with safeguarding procedures, taking immediate action if required e.g contacting police.
- Avoid visiting out of hours (after the close of school reception desk).
- Ensure they are aware of exit route from the property i.e. make a mental note of house layout.
- Be aware of surroundings to identify any potential safety threats or issues that will need to be addressed with parent/carer e.g. child protection ‘red flags’.
- Do not put yourself in a position where you are isolated (e.g. go upstairs to see child alone without parent or without second member of staff or be in a room with door shut with child alone).
- If any safeguarding concerns arise from/or during the home visit these must be reported via normal safeguarding channels (e.g. my concern / CPOMS, report to DSL).

2. Managing an unexpected concern

If concern is noted prior to entering the property:

- Risk assess whether it is safe to continue with the visit
- Arrange for Receptionist/SLT to call on arrival to ‘check in’
- If the concern arises during the visit:
- If you feel intimidated/threatened or uncomfortable – terminate the home visit in a courteous way, making up an excuse to leave if necessary.
- If you feel you are in immediate danger – do not excuse, leave the property immediately.

3. Returning from a visit

It is the responsibility of the staff members conducting the home visit(s) to sign back in at school and confirm completion of the visit(s).

Staff at St Mary’s to record the Home Visit on the Home Visit form which is scanned and logged on the pupil(s)’ CPOMS file. Staff at Spring Meadow should record the Home Visit straight onto CPOMS.

Any safeguarding concerns are reported to a DSL on return as a cause for concern, outlined in the school’s safeguarding policy.

Appendix E – Ely St Mary’s End of Day Hand Over Procedures to Parent/Carer/Adult

1. Purpose

Ely St Mary's recognises the importance of keeping pupils safe and aims to provide a safe and secure environment and the objective of this protocol is to ensure a smooth drop off and collection process to always be in place.

2. For All Pupils

2.1 To aid with continuity for the children, it is the parents' responsibility to arrive on time for pupil drop off or pick up. Late arrivals and early departures are acceptable but to be avoided if possible.

2.2 The school will be ready to receive all pupils from 8:40am (registration closes at 08:50am) and will ensure the pupils are ready to go home at their official departure time of 3:20pm.

2.3 To support safeguarding procedures at drop off and pick up, there will always be at least one member of staff on duty at each entrance point (member of SLT; member of Pastoral Team; Site Supervisor). The presence of these staff provide an early opportunity to note the absence of students or familiar parents/carers; to note the addition of unfamiliar adults on collection; to note an unsupervised child; to be a point of communication or source of help for adults and pupils alike.

2.4 As a junior school, we recognise our pupils are of an age where they begin to prepare for college and increasing independence. We therefore request parent permissions regarding:

- Whether a child is able to walk home
- Emergency contacts, including those with permission to collect the child(ren)
- Any adults who do not have permission to collect children and, where applicable, any supporting documentation such as court orders.

We request this information as part of our admissions process and then annually thereafter (typically at the autumn parent consultations). Likewise, we ask to be notified of any changes to these permissions mid-year via the school office so these can be recorded on Bromcom and in-class lists can be updated immediately.

2.5 With supply or new staff, the school will endeavour to ensure a familiar, existing member of staff supports during end-of-day handover initially. Where this is not possible, the school provides a discreet file in each classroom containing a list of :

- children with permission to walk home;
- pupils who have specific restrictions around the adults allowed to collect (further information can be obtained from a DSL as necessary) *1;
- pupils due to attend a club.

2.6 We permit older siblings to collect a KS2 pupil from school but this is only with the parents' consent and their due regard for the needs and abilities, including risk awareness, of both the pupil and collecting sibling. Should staff be concerned at pick up/drop off, this will be raised with the safeguarding team who will discuss with parents the best way forward to plan for safety and success.

*1

In the case of marital or custody disputes, unless there is a Court Order in place and school have had sight of this, the school do not have the right to prevent a pupil leaving with either parent who has parental rights.

In the event of a Court Order, the school will only release the pupil to the parent stated at that time in the Court Order, unless prior written permission is granted by this parent.

If a parent/carer, who is not named as having access/current responsibility for the pupil attempts to collect the pupil, the school will not release the pupil and will contact the parent/carer named on the Court Order as having current responsibility.

If the attendance at the school results in risk to adults or pupils, the school will contact the police for support.

Should a parent/carer come to collect a pupil and the school suspect that they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise unable to care for their child, we will detain the pupil and attempt to contact another carer (e.g., the other parent or emergency contact) to ask them to come and escort the adult and child home. We may also contact the Social Services Duty Desk and/or the police for advice and support.

3. Handover Arrangements for Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3/4)

- Adults collect children from the classrooms where staff can release children one at a time to ensure a secure handover.

- Staff must 'give' the pupil to a known adult at the end of each day. We take an 'eyes on' approach to this process.
- Parents have a responsibility to inform the school if a pupil is going home with a different pupil or is being collected by a different adult.
- Only children with expressed written permission to walk home will be released independently.

4. Upper Key Stage Two

- As above
- We recognise that pupils in Y5 and 6 are more likely to go home without an adult. Pupils are reminded what to do in the event of a problem such as no one being home (pupils should return to the school office immediately)

5. Late Collection or Non collection

It is the responsibility of all parents/carers to arrive in good time to collect their child. If a parent/carer/representative has not arrived after 10 minutes (by 3:30pm) they are deemed late, and the following procedure takes place:

- The pupil will continue to be cared for as usual by the offices and every effort will be made to make sure the pupil is not upset by the situation.
- Attempts will be made to contact the parent on all the given telephone numbers. If this produces no result, the pupil's designated emergency numbers, including work contacts (if known), will be used to contact a responsible adult. The school may seek to contact education and/or care settings of siblings to establish if they have been collected or have had contact from parents/carers.
- If, after one hour the parent or carer has still not arrived and staff have been unable to make contact with another member of the family or family friend it may be necessary to contact Children's Social Care Services and/or the police and take their advice.

6. After School Clubs

- As a junior school, pupils are permitted to walk themselves to their club – hall/ classroom/art studio. Lower Key Stage 2 pupils are supported in this process by being escorted by their class teacher, TA or club leader.
- Club leaders will take a register at the beginning of each session and notify the office coordinator of any missing pupils.
- The office coordinator will check for missing pupils who do not already have a known absence.
- Staff will check for these children in school e.g. have they been delayed at their classroom? Are they changing in a different room?
- Office Coordinator will then call the child's parent/carers to confirm the child's whereabouts and safety and, once confirmed, reasons for non-attendance.
- Any changes to club attendance e.g. last minute cancellation will be communicated via text and email also to ensure quick delivery of communication.
- At the end of a club, leaders will sign pupils out as they are collected by a parent/carer.
- Club leaders will retain a list of emergency contacts to call in the event of non collection. External club leaders will be able to contact the Headteacher & DSL via mobile phone in the event of a concern beyond 4:30pm where a DSL may not still be on site (This only applies to Active Play as all other clubs are scheduled to end by 4:30pm).

7. Use of school premises for non-school activities

As Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 para. 155-56 sets out:

Use of school or college premises for non-school/college activities:

169. Where governing bodies or proprietors hire or rent out school or college facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extracurricular activities) they should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

170. When services or activities are provided by the governing body or proprietor, under the direct supervision or management of their school or college staff, their arrangements for child protection will apply. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. The governing body or proprietor should therefore seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school or college on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll or attend the college. The governing body or proprietor should also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-schools settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place.

Therefore, the school will seek assurances that such lettings/providers/persons have appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures, and checks. The school will require the co-operation and understanding of these bodies to ensure children are appropriately protected.

Appendix F – Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School End of Day Hand Over Procedures to Parent/Carer/Adult

1. Purpose

Spring Meadow recognises the importance of keeping pupils safe and aims to provide a safe and secure environment and the objective of this protocol is to ensure a smooth drop off and collection process to always be in place.

2. For All Pupils

- 2.1 To aid with continuity for the children, it is the parents' responsibility to arrive on time for pupil drop off or pick up. Late arrivals and early departures are acceptable but to be avoided if possible.
- 2.2 The school will be ready to receive all pupils from 8:45am (registration closes at 8:55am) and will ensure the pupils are ready to go home at their official departure time of 3:15pm.
- 2.3 To support safeguarding procedures at drop off and pick up, there will always be at least one member of staff on duty at each entrance point (member of SLT; member of Pastoral Team; Site Supervisor). The presence of these staff provide an early opportunity to note the absence of students or familiar parents/carers; to note the addition of unfamiliar adults on collection; to note an unsupervised child; to be a point of communication or source of help for adults and pupils alike.
- 2.4 As an infant school, we recognise our pupils are of an age where a responsible adult must be available for collection. We therefore require the following information from parents/carers:
 - Emergency contacts, including those with permission to collect the child(ren)
 - Any adults who do not have permission to collect children and, where applicable, any supporting documentation such as court orders.
 - We request this information as part of our admissions process and then annually thereafter (typically at the autumn parent consultations). Likewise, we ask to be notified of any changes to these permissions mid-year via the school office so these can be recorded on our systems
- 2.5 With supply or new staff, the school will ensure a familiar, existing member of staff supports during end-of-day handover
- 2.6 We permit older siblings to collect a pupil from school but this is only with the parents' consent and their due regard for the needs and abilities, including risk awareness, of both the pupil and collecting sibling. Should staff be concerned at pick up/drop off, this will be raised with the safeguarding team who will discuss with parents the best way forward to plan for safety and success.

*1

In the case of marital or custody disputes, unless there is a Court Order in place and school have had sight of this, the school do not have the right to prevent a pupil leaving with either parent who has parental rights.

In the event of a Court Order, the school will only release the pupil to the parent stated at that time in the Court Order, unless prior written permission is granted by this parent.

If a parent/carer, who is not named as having access/current responsibility for the pupil attempts to collect the pupil, the school will not release the pupil and will contact the parent/carer named on the Court Order as having current responsibility.

If the attendance at the school results in risk to adults or pupils, the school will contact the police for support.

Should a parent/carer come to collect a pupil and the school suspect that they may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or otherwise unable to care for their child, we will detain the pupil and attempt to contact another carer (e.g., the other parent or emergency contact) to ask them to come and escort the adult and child home. We may also contact the Social Services Duty Desk and/or the police for advice and support.

3. Handover Arrangements

- Adults collect children from the classrooms where staff can release children one at a time to ensure a secure handover.
- Staff must 'give' the pupil to a known adult at the end of each day. We take an 'eyes on' approach to this process.
- Parents have a responsibility to inform the school if a pupil is going home with a different pupil or is being collected by a different adult.

4. Late Collection or Non collection

It is the responsibility of all parents/carers to arrive in good time to collect their child. If a parent/carer/representative has not arrived after 10 minutes (by 3:25pm) they are deemed late, and the following procedure takes place:

- The pupil will continue to be cared for as usual by the offices and every effort will be made to make sure the pupil is not upset by the situation.
- Attempts will be made to contact the parent on all the given telephone numbers. If this produces no result, the pupil's designated emergency numbers, including work contacts (if known), will be used to contact a responsible adult. The school may seek to contact education and/or care settings of siblings to establish if they have been collected or have had contact from parents/carers.
- If, after one hour the parent or carer has still not arrived and staff have been unable to make contact with another member of the family or family friend it may be necessary to contact Children's Social Care Services and/or the police and take their advice.

4. After School Clubs

- As an infant school, pupils will be accompanied to after school clubs either by a member of staff running the after school club or a member of Spring Meadow staff
- Club leaders will take a register at the beginning of each session and notify the office coordinator of any missing pupils.
- The office coordinator will check for missing pupils who do not already have a known absence.
- Staff will check for these children in school e.g. have they been delayed at their classroom? Are they changing in a different room?
- Office Coordinator will then call the child's parent/carers to confirm the child's whereabouts and safety and, once confirmed, reasons for non-attendance.
- Any changes to club attendance e.g. last minute cancellation will be communicated via text and email also to ensure quick delivery of communication.
- At the end of a club, leaders will sign pupils out as they are collected by a parent/carers.
- Club leaders will retain a list of emergency contacts to call in the event of non-collection. External club leaders will be able to contact the Headteacher & DSL via mobile phone in the event of a concern beyond 4:30pm where a DSL may not still be on site (This only applies to Active Play as all other clubs are scheduled to end by 4:30pm).

5. Use of school premises for non-school activities

As Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 para. 155-56 sets out:

Use of school or college premises for non-school/college activities:

169. Where governing bodies or proprietors hire or rent out school or college facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extracurricular activities) they should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe.

170. When services or activities are provided by the governing body or proprietor, under the direct supervision or management of their school or college staff, their arrangements for child protection will apply. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. The governing body or proprietor should therefore seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the school or college on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are children on the school roll or attend the college. The governing body or proprietor should also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement. The guidance on Keeping children safe in out-of-schools settings details the safeguarding arrangements that schools and colleges should expect these providers to have in place.

Therefore, the school will seek assurances that such lettings/providers/persons have appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures, and checks. The school will require the co-operation and understanding of these bodies to ensure children are appropriately protected.

Appendix G – Attendance Codes (abbreviated) as cited in Working together to improve school attendance Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities Published: 29 February 2024 Applies from: 19 August 2024

Attendance and absence codes

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder).

The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence.

The codes are set out in regulation 10(2) Table 1, 10(3) Table 2 and 10(4) Table 3, 10(8) and 10(10) of the regulations and summarised below.

Attending the school

Relevant regulation 10(2) Table 1

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending.

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending.

Attending a place other than the school

Relevant regulation 10(3) Table 2

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision (regulation 10(5)), examples are:

- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring.

Schools should ensure that the arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

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.

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.

If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. The final decision on approving the activity, however, rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account.

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 sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code W: Attending work experience

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.

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.

305. 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 work experience notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

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.

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.⁸⁰

309. Schools must also record the nature of the approved educational activity (regulation 10(5)), examples are:

- attending taster days at other schools;
- attending courses at college;
- attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school.

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.

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3

The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.

The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.

Absent - leave of absence

Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3

All schools must use the following codes to record the reason for a pupil being absent with leave:

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.

All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only do so in the following circumstances (under regulation 11(2)):

- Where the local authority have granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a pupil does not need a licence for such a performance because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place or the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. Where a local authority licence specifies the dates that a pupil is to be away from school to perform, the school should record the absence for those days as if a leave of absence had been applied for and granted. Where the terms of the local authority licence do not specify dates, however, or where a BOPA or other exemption or licence from a Justice of the Peace applies, it is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence.

Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record a pupil who is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or work abroad under a licence or exemption as described above.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

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

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

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

Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(4), where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence) and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

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 an interview for employment or for admission to another educational establishment. This interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

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

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).

Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and should be used sparingly. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave that has been granted for the purpose of studying for a public examination.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

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

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 compulsory school age to attend school part-time.

Schools that are not required to follow regulation 11, must still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.

Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.

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

Under compulsory school age

In cases where a parent wishes their child to begin school on a part-time basis in line with the school admissions code, schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence for sessions the pupil is not expected to attend. This must be agreed between the school and the parent they normally live with and must end at the point at which the pupil reaches compulsory school age. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed by the school and the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with.

Over compulsory school age

Where a sixth form pupil's timetable does not require them to be on site for every session of the week, a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority may give leave of absence. The times and dates when the pupil is expected to attend the school must be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives with or the pupil.

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

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 –

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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).

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

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Pregnant pupils

Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Ultimately, it is at the school's discretion how much leave to grant.

Absent - other authorised reasons

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

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

Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there are genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt over the reason given, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Whilst for statistical purposes this is counted as authorised absence, if a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement.

Defence in the law

Parents can in some circumstances, present a defence against prosecution, under section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. This defence applies where the child has no fixed abode, and the parent can prove that they are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place and that the child has been attending school as regularly as the trade or business permits. If the child is aged 6 or older, the parent must also prove that the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months. This is in addition to the requirement to prove that the child has attended as regularly as the trade or business permits, which means that if the trade or business permits the child to attend for more than 200, they should do so.

Code R: Religious observance

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

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.

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.

Schools and local authorities may seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as:

- Setting term dates around days for religious observance;
- Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on absence for religious observance;
- Taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days; and
- Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)

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

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.

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

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

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.

When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made for the session in question and the pupil is attending it, schools should record this using the appropriate attendance code in regulation

10(3) Table 2 or if the pupil is attending another school at which they are a registered pupil, schools should record this using code D (dual registered at another school).

This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

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

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.

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

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

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

Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

Relevant regulation 10(10)

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.

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

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 10(14)

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.

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.

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.

Schools are expected to communicate with the pupil's Youth Offending Team worker while the pupil is in custody and remains on the school roll to discuss the pupil's educational needs, progress and return to the school upon their release where appropriate. Education is a key part of effective resettlement, therefore it is important that schools maintain contact with the Youth Offending Team throughout the sentence to support the child's resettlement where appropriate.

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

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

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

- contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or
- prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.

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

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.

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

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

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

Absent - unauthorised absence

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school

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

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

This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

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Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

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.

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.

This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

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

This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Relevant regulation 10 (7) and (8)

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

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

This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Administrative codes

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.

Most school admissions involve the school or admission authority offering a place to the parent of the prospective pupil (or, in the case of admission to sixth form, the prospective pupil). An offer of a place is not an agreement. Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or by the fact of the pupil attending the school on that day. In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place and starting day offered, the local authority can communicate that agreement to schools on behalf of the parent. This can also be the case where the local authority coordinate in-year applications for school places.

Schools must enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name must be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before the beginning of the first session on that day. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must follow this up and try to establish the reason for absence.

This code is not collected for statistical purposes.

Code #: Planned whole school closure

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.
This code is not collected for statistical purpose