



Attendance Policy

Responsibility	Parents, Students and Community	
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Contents

1. Aims	3
2. Legislation and guidance	3
3. Roles and Responsibilities	3
4. Recording attendance	7
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence	9
6. Strategies for promoting attendance	11
7. Attendance monitoring	13
8. Monitoring the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and interventions	15
9. Linked Policies and documents	15
Appendix 1: Attendance codes	16

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board

The trust board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The trust board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Attendance trustee

The attendance trustee is Evan Demetriou.

The role of the Attendance Trustee is to liaise with the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance in school and with the Head Teacher regarding issues around student attendance. The Attendance Trustee should ensure that the school has appropriate policies that are implemented and reviewed regularly and will occasionally be asked to sit in on Attendance Panels with parents where student attendance is being discussed.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr C Briggs and can be contacted via SLT@rts.richmond.sch.uk

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Head Teacher
- Working with education welfare service as directed by the senior leader responsible for attendance to address persistent absence and severe absence
- Advising the Head Teacher/designated senior leader responsible for attendance when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Daily

- Conducting spot checks for post registration (and informing parents/carers immediately if this occurs)
- Using the information provided from roll call records, to make and log wellbeing calls on the first and second day of absence for students whose attendance is below 90%
- Monitoring punctuality to school and lessons, ensuring appropriate sanctions are given for persistent lateness in accordance with the school behaviour policy
- Supervision of late detentions and during break time on a rotational basis

The attendance officer is Ms E Bull and can be contacted via attendance@rts.richmond.sch.uk

Head of Year (HoY)

The Head of Year (HoY) is responsible for monitoring the attendance of their Year group:

Weekly

- Review attendance of their year group using the centralised attendance tracking system
- Reviewing Persistent Absence list and taking action as appropriate to improve attendance

Bi-weekly

- Meeting regularly with the Tutors and SLT Line Manager to discuss action with regards to students whose attendance falls below 91%
- Through assemblies, ensure that attendance and punctuality issues have a high profile and that good attendance and punctuality are recognised and rewarded
- Providing progress updates on persistent absentees in their year group as part of calendared Safeguarding Team meetings
- Receive and review attendance of students attending Alternative Provision placements

3-weekly

- With the SLT Responsible for Attendance to agree on letters to be sent home to families where attendance is between 92-94% (letter 2) and arrange meetings with families whose attendance is between 90-91.99% (letter 3)
- Closely monitoring the attendance of students whose attendance falls below 94%

When required

- Organising and overseeing the support for students who have been on **'long term absence'**

Academic Tutor

The academic tutor is responsible for:

- Taking Roll Call: daily registration during AM academic tutor time
- Acting on monitoring requests made by the HoY to support the close monitoring of attendance, including making phone calls home, keeping relevant staff informed of any attendance concerns in their academic tutor group
- Returning any written notes received regarding absence to the Attendance Officer
- As instructed by the HoY, monitor attendance and punctuality of students in the academic tutor

form, particularly those whose attendance is between 96-92%

- Discussing attendance issues/concerns with the student
- Informing the HoY of any attendance concerns
- Making and logging a wellbeing call on the first and second day of absence to tutees
- Reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- Emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- Promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- Follow up on absence and lateness with students to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Review form group attendance weekly, identify issues, intervene early and set targets

Teachers

The teacher is responsible for:

- Taking Roll Call: daily registration - PM - during P5
- Marking the Arbor register each lesson within the first 5 minutes of the lesson starting
- Informing the Attendance Officer, via on call request, of any student who has been highlighted as having a safety plan that they are missing from the lesson
- Updating the register if a student arrives late to the lesson with L and the time and record a P2 behaviour
- Informing the HoY of any attendance concerns
- Placing all lesson resources content on Google Classroom
- Devising a plan with/for absent students to ensure all missed work is caught up

School Office and Welfare staff

School Office and Welfare staff will:

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

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:30 on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Making medical appointments out of school time as far as possible
- Avoiding holidays during term time and to seek permission from the Head Teacher at least a month in advance of any family holiday which needs to be taken in term time.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

4. Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

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

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school no later than by 08:35 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:55 and will be kept open until 09:30. The register for the second session will be taken during period 5 (13:50 to 14:15 Monday to Friday)

Unplanned absence

- Parents/carers are asked to notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09:30 or as soon as practically possible. They can do this by email attendance@rts.richmond.sch.uk or by telephone 0208 891 2985 Option 1.
- Parents/Carers are contacted if students have failed to arrive by 10:30 and notice of their absence has not been received
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness

- We will ensure the appropriate safeguarding actions have been taken
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment
- We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary
- The student's parent/carer must also seek permission from the Head Teacher for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence

Lateness

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Students are expected to be in school by 08.30 and to attend registration at 08.35.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit, where possible and in accordance with the school's Home Visit Protocol / Risk Assessment in some cases it may be necessary to contact the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports. All parents have access to Arbor where they can review live attendance and absence levels on demand.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Criteria for Exceptional Circumstances

- A. If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- B. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- C. The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- D. Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- E. To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Head Teacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Head Teacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents/carers to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Head Teacher may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Head Teacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- The first half term of any academic year,
- Last two week of the summer term or
- During public exams (Year 11).

Valid reasons for authorised absence

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see additional information under section 4 'Planned absence')
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh

Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

Exceptional term time leave requests additional factors

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- A. Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- B. Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- C. The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- D. Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- E. Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school
- F. Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- G. Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- H. The impact that the absence will have on the child
- I. Whether it falls within any school assessment periods or public exams

Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The school can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school resulting from holidays taken during term time, where the child is of compulsory school age.

- If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

This section outlines the actions that the school takes to improve attendance for all students, students at risk of poor attendance and students who are persistently absent.

The designated senior leader for attendance and Heads of Year

The designated senior leader for attendance and Heads of Year will

- regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality through your normal channels of communication with staff, students and parents
- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new students and families through admission and transition events
- establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
- monitor implementation of policy and practice
- monitor whole school data daily, weekly and half-termly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establish, implement and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME)
- develop good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
- engage students in consultation on attendance policy, practice, rewards and sanctions
- ensure that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education

The designated senior leader for attendance and Heads of Year will support students at risk of persistent absence by

- Implementing robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem
- establishing a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- monitoring the implementation and quality of escalation procedures (and intervention)
- evaluating the impact of escalation procedures and seeking robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work and that reflect the school context best
- attending or leading on attendance reviews and clinics in line with escalation procedures
- engaging trustees in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

The designated senior leader for attendance and Heads of Year will support students who are persistently absent by

- establishing clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support students with persistent absence
- establishing good relationships with a network of voluntary organisations and charities to support vulnerable students including those with persistent absence,
- engaging in or leading on attendance reviews and clinics in line with escalation procedures

Academic tutors and teaching staff

All students

- rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate students to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- apply rewards and sanctions consistently
- follow up on absence and lateness with students to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- Make and log a wellbeing call on the first and second day of absence(Academic tutors)
- review form group attendance weekly, identify issues, intervene early and set targets
- periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of students

Students at risk of persistent absence

- welcome students back following an absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- meet with students to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
- establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups

Students who are persistently absent

- ensure all classroom resources are available in GoogleClassroom and organised sequentially to ensure students can access learning when they return
- contribute to targeted intervention to address gaps and build students' confidence
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate
- provide tailored praise and encouragement when students attend and arrive on time

Attendance officer, student wellbeing coordinator and pastoral staff

All students

- engage with feeder schools to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves
- provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice
- carry out robust first-day absence procedures including priority routine calls for vulnerable children including children with a social worker
- undertake home visits, in line our Home Visit Protocol and Risk Assessment, to engage families and ensure children are safe
- identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies
- implement punctuality routines including late sign in procedures (see paragraph 5.7)
- implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate
- ensure that parents/carers fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education (EHE)
- where students have additional vulnerabilities which may require multi-agency meetings try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible

Students at risk of persistent absence

- provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and student premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the 'at-risk' cohort
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance consultant to raise awareness of emerging at-risk student

Students who are persistently absent

- develop and implement persistent absence action plans with students and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the students (e.g. mentoring, careers advice and guidance input, out of hours learning and alternative provision where appropriate.)
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the local authority attendance team, external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- work in partnership with Local Authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions

7. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

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

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

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

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

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Level 1 - At risk of PA 90-92%

- Make and log wellbeing calls on the first and second day of absence (HoY)

Level 2 - PA 80-90%

- Communicate concerns with parents/carers regularly through phone calls, letters and meetings
- make referrals to support services and completing Early help assessments to identify needs at an early stage engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
- Use evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance including:
 - Use attendance clinics
 - Building positive relationships with parents and carers
- Use the Student Wellbeing Coordinator working with student and their families in a child-centred way to plan and review appropriate interventions
- Implement in-school early-help services
- engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate

Level 3 - Severe Absenteeism 70% and below

- Invite student and their parents/carers to a legal attendance meeting
- Issue fixed penalty notices
- Implement in-school early-help services

Safeguarding Team Attendance Conferences

The Safeguarding Team meets to discuss Attendance either bi-weekly and no less than twice per half-term. These meetings are included in the staff calendar at the start of each school term.

- The meeting is jointly Chaired by the DSL and senior leader with responsibility for Attendance and attended by: the SENCO, Heads of Year, Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Attendance Officer and, by invitation, an independent attendance and welfare consultant.

Attendance Clinic

An Attendance Clinic is a meeting with Students, Parents/Carers and Attendance Officer and/or Independent Attendance and Welfare Consultant. These meetings are used to identify how improvements in attendance can be made. If little improvements are not made the School may begin the process of warnings, visits and possibly fines.

School Attendance Panel

The School Attendance Panel meets with parents/carers whose children's attendance has not improved in spite of support from the school and other external services.

- This meeting will be chaired by the DSL and senior leader with responsibility for Attendance and attended by the Attendance Lead Trustee, HoY, the student and their parents/carers.

8. Monitoring the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and interventions

The designated senior leader responsible for Attendance monitors the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and interventions through:

- Analysis of termly attendance data
- Safeguarding Team Attendance Meetings
- Attendance Panel Meetings with Parents/Carers
- Leading external attendance reviews
- Engaging trustees in Attendance Panels to reinforce messages about good attendance

9. Linked Policies and documents

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Behaviour for Learning

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day