

Children's Services

Integrated Services for Learning

LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

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1. Introduction

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children, individual schools and for Hertfordshire as a whole. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way we employ staff to the way we deliver services. It is a central responsibility of members, managers and employees of the County Council to ensure that every individual that we come into contact with is treated with dignity and respect.

This Attendance Policy is intended to guide, assist and empower schools to meet their responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

2. Statement of Intent

Hertfordshire County Council expects Children's Services, Integrated Services for Learning and all schools to work closely together in partnership with parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

3. Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy (if the school has an attendance policy) of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct

- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

4. Responsibilities - Schools

Lodge Farm Primary School is responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers –

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. If the register is called at the end of the afternoon session schools should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils do not leave school between registrations. They should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information should be publicised to parents.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2)

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent

correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

In order to reduce the possibility of post registration truancy secondary schools are encouraged to take class registers in each lesson and/or carry out regular spot checks.

Schools should:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- have clear policies in place to address the attendance of vulnerable groups
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Schools should recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. They should also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.

Punctuality

Schools should take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

Lodge Farm Primary School policies, brochures and website should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. Lodge Farm primary School does not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

School Attendance Policy

Schools are not required to have an attendance policy but are encouraged to do so.

Attendance

Helen Turner, Headteacher, has overall responsibility for attendance and closely monitors and reviews the attendance of all children. The **minimum expectation** is that children attend school for 95% of the time. Where attendance falls below 95%, the Headteacher writes to parents, on a termly basis, offering support and reminding them that children are classed as “persistent absentees” once their attendance drops below 90%. (***Appendix A***).

In cases where attendance falls below 85%, the Headteacher writes to parents explaining that in order for future absences to be “authorised”, medical evidence will need to be provided such as copies of prescriptions / doctor’s letters etc. The Headteacher’s letter also offers support and explains that the matter will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) from Herts County Council.

The AIO meets regularly with the Headteacher to review official attendance registers and identifies children whose absence is a cause for concern and takes further action where necessary.

A termly attendance and punctuality letter is sent out by the Headteacher to all families advising of the overall percentage attendance figure calculated up to the end of term and class punctuality figures. Attendance and punctuality are also mentioned in the school weekly newsletter.

Attendance Awards

The school works in partnership with parents and the Attendance Improvement Officer to promote good attendance.

At the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms, Gold Attendance Certificates are awarded to all those children who have achieved at least 98% attendance.

At the end of the summer term, Red Attendance Certificates are also awarded to every child who has received a Gold Attendance Certificate for each of the 3 terms during the academic year.

Punctuality

It is crucial that children are punctual in order for them to start the school day with the rest of their peers. Learning starts during registration time - arriving late compromises children's progress and disrupts the learning experience for all the other children in the classroom.

Arrangements For The start Of The School Day Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1

The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 school day commences at 8.55am when children should be in the classroom ready for Registration.

A whistle is blown at 8.50am to indicate that the classroom doors are open and that the children can come into the class. A second whistle is blown at 8.55 am to signify the official start of the KS1 and Foundation Stage school day. Classroom doors are shut at this point.

(If parents need to speak to their child's teacher we encourage them to make an appointment through the office or, if it is a 'quick' enquiry, they should go promptly to the classroom door at 8.50am. This will enable us to begin the school day on time.)

Arrangements For The Start Of The School Day Key Stage 2

The Key Stage 2 school day commences with Registration at 8.50am.

A bell will ring at 8.45am to indicate that the children should line up in alphabetical order with their teachers on the playground. Parents are then expected to stand behind the wall. A second bell will then ring at 8.50am to signify the official start of the KS2 school day. Parents leave the playground at this point and teachers lead the children swiftly to their classrooms to start their learning

(If parents need to speak to their child's teacher we encourage them to make an appointment through the office or if it is a 'quick' enquiry, they should go promptly to the playground at 8.45am. This will enable us to begin the school day on time.)

Late Arrivals

Children who arrive late for school (ie. after 8.55am for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 or after 8.50am for Key Stage 2), must report directly to the School Office where their names are recorded, along with their time of arrival. They are

subsequently marked as “Late” on the official attendance records together with the number of minutes late. Where a child arrives late for school, after 9.15am (ie. after the registers have closed), this is deemed to be an “Unauthorised” late arrival and is recorded as such on the official attendance records.

The Headteacher closely monitors punctuality and writes on a half-termly basis to the parents of children who have been late on 3 or more occasions during the half term. If punctuality continues to be a problem during the following half term, the Headteacher will write asking the parent to attend a meeting to discuss the situation and will also bring the matter to the attention of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) from Herts County Council. Sensitivity is always shown to individual pupils’ and family needs.

The AIO meets regularly with the Headteacher to review official registers and identify children who are often late and take further action where necessary.

If no improvement is seen during the following half term, the parent may be asked to come in and meet with representatives of the School’s Governing Body.

Late minutes throughout the term add up and, where a child is late after the registers close, this also brings down their overall percentage attendance.

Absence

If a child is going to be absent from school (eg. illness), parents must contact the school office by 9.30am on the first day of absence and confirm the reason. We ask that parents keep in regular contact thereafter until their child returns to school, and certainly where absence extends into another week.

If no contact has been made by 9.30am, the child is marked as “Unauthorised Absence” on the official attendance registers.

If we have not heard from parents and carers by 9.30am to tell us why their child is not coming to school that day, we will attempt to make contact with them. The details of telephone calls are recorded and monitored.

Where there is an absence of more than one week, we would request that parents provide medical evidence where possible, ie. copy of a prescription, doctor’s letter, copy of prescribed medication label etc.

Medical Appointments

We would request that, where possible, routine medical appointments are made outside of the school day. Obviously, we understand that appointments are not always under parents' control and when an appointment has been booked during the school day, parents should advise us in advance of the appointment (in writing), providing a copy of the appointment letter / appointment card where possible. On the day of the appointment, parents should collect their child from the school office where they will be required to sign them out of school and sign them back in again immediately after the appointment.

If a child has a medical appointment locally, they are expected to come into school **before** and **after** the appointment, eg. if the appointment is at 9.45am, we would expect the child to come into school first and return immediately afterwards. (The Headteacher cannot authorise half day or whole day medical appointments unless they are out of Stevenage, eg. at Great Ormond Street, Cambridge etc).

Emergency Medical Appointments - On the occasions when children need to attend a local emergency appointment with a doctor/dentist, parents should call the school office first thing in the morning to keep the school informed. If we do not hear from you **beforehand**, the absence would be recorded as an "Unauthorised Absence".

Term-Time Absence

The school actively discourages parents from taking their children out of school during term time. However, if a parent still wishes to do so, a Leave of Absence Request must be completed (available from the school office) and submitted at

least 2 weeks in advance of the absence. The absence is then recorded as a period of unauthorised absence on the official attendance registers. Leave of absence during term time is granted only in exceptional circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion.

Fixed Penalty Notices For Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are when:

- A term time holiday has taken place.
- Your child arrives late, after the register has closed (ie. after 9.15pm)
- We have not received notification of absence.
- No evidence is provided, if requested by school (when attendance is an ongoing concern, eg. persistently below 90%, the Senior Leadership Team will meet with you and ask you for medical evidence eg. prescriptions and / or appointment slips).

The Headteacher regularly monitors unauthorised absences. Once a child's attendance record shows 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the Headteacher is required to send a formal warning letter to the parent. This is known as an FPN1 Letter and advises the parent that they are at risk of being in breach of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007. This letter explains that if the number of unauthorised absence sessions reaches 15 or more in the **current and/or previous term** the Local Authority may issue the parent with a penalty notice. (This applies, even though the previous term may have been in the previous academic year ie. the child may be taking some unauthorised absence during September / October (Autumn Term), but any unauthorised absence already taken during the previous April to July (Summer Term), will also be included.)

At the point the unauthorised absence sessions reaches 15, the Headteacher is required to issue an FPN2 Letter to the parent which advises the parent that they are in breach of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and that they may receive a fine from the Local Authority.

In some cases, Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued to both parents with or without parental responsibility if they are involved in the care of the child.

One session is either 1 morning or 1 afternoon

Two sessions equates to one day

15 sessions equates to 7.5 school days.

A Fixed Penalty Notice means:-

- **A fine of £60.00, if paid within 21 days**
- **A fine of £120.00, if paid within 28 days**

Please Note: Non-payment of fines can lead to prosecution.

Good practice suggests that the following should be taken into consideration when writing a school attendance policy:-

- make provision for first-day of absence contact
- contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence
- prioritise the importance of early intervention
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- be sensitive to individual pupils' needs
- be alert to critical times (e.g. secondary transfer)
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
- establish clear lines of communication with outside agencies
- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness
- provide for effective primary-secondary liaison
- inform and involve governors
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
- explain how attendance information will be shared with parents (newsletters, website etc)
- be reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents that it is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.

- notify the Local Authority of any pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences ([link to reporting form on Herts Grid](#))

5. Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Team

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Lodge Farm Primary School has a link Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who will work in partnership with the school.

In working closely with schools the Attendance Teams offer the following services:-

ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an AIO between the hours of 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday and between the hours of 9.00 am to 3.30 pm on a Friday.

Types of enquiries may include –

- school issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- FPN enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

VISITS TO SCHOOLS

All schools have a named link AIO who will liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

Data analysis is an important part of this process and AIOs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and draw up plans to address any specific issues. Analysis may include:

- persistent absence
- absence profile
- use of register codes
- comparison of form groups in individual years
- percentage of absence due to holidays
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- types of absence e.g. a few pupils with significant absence or many pupils with occasional absence
- lateness after registers close
- year by year percentage attendance
- attendance trends – is attendance increasing or decreasing?

Other than engaging in casework there are a variety of supportive ways in which AIOs can work with schools to increase attendance levels.

Attendance Surgeries

AIOs can support schools by attending attendance surgeries, to meet with a number of pupils and parents where attendance or persistent absence has been identified as a concern and early intervention deemed an appropriate action to undertake.

Governors Meetings

AIOs may attend governors meetings to explain various aspects of the work of the attendance team – case work, legal work, FPNs etc.

Casework

Once a case has been accepted, the AIO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (see appendix 1).

6. The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to pupils in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the pupil's poor attendance will be explored

- the attitudes of the parent and pupil towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the pupil's attendance at school

7. Education Related Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

8. School Attendance Orders

If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he/she does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school). The LA will serve a School Attendance Order under Sections 437 - 439 of the Education Act 1996. This requires the parent to register their child at a school named by the Local Authority.

9. Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to-date. Schools should regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This will assist both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

All schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies and independent schools.

For further guidance see - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml>

Responsibilities of the AIO – Attendance Registers

Inspection of registers

Registers should be available for inspection during school hours by an Attendance Improvement Officer when requested.

If the link AIO is concerned that a school's registers have not been kept in accordance with the requirements of the relevant regulations he/she will:

- notify the Headteacher of the concern and request that the matter is addressed
- if no appropriate action is taken by the school, and the AIO remains concerned, the Attendance Team Manager will address the concern with the Headteacher
- if the matter still remains unresolved, the Attendance Team Manager will write to the Headteacher formally noting the concern. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant ISL Area Manager and the County Lead for Access and Inclusion

Registers - Retention

Registers should be kept in a secure place for a period of not less than 3 years.

When computerised registration systems are used a print-out of the register should be made not less than once a month. A print-out of the register relating to a particular school year should be bound in a single volume and retained for a period of not less than 3 years.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to

the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has “disappeared” the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

10. Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Schools should communicate to parents their policies with regard to the notification and categorisation of absence. Some parents, such as those whose first language is not English or who do not read or write may experience difficulty in providing notes. In such cases schools should seek to make alternative arrangements.

Schools are encouraged to keep all absence notes for at least a term and when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as ‘leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school’)
- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school;

boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home

- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- a Year 11 pupil is granted study leave. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C

Further guidance is available at -

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

11. Administrative Codes

There are a number of administrative codes which are not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. They must only be used in the circumstances described:

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Code Y)

This code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes but is not counted as a possible attendance It may be used when:
the school site, or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause; or
the transport provided by the school or the local authority is not available *and*
where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or

a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

- Not required to be in school (Code X)

is used to record sessions that non –compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

- Pupil not on admission register (Code Z)

enables schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

- Planned whole of partial school closure (Code #)

should be used for closures that are planned or known in advance eg holidays, curriculum planning/training days (up to five per year) or the use of the school as a polling station.

- Different Term Dates for Different Pupils (Code #)

can also be used to record staggered starts or induction days. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

12. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code.

The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*
- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

(Study leave is NOT an approved educational activity)

A pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is attending:

- an approved work experience placement (Code W)
- a field trip or educational visit (Code V)
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school (Code P)

- the pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment (Code J)
- an off-site educational activity (Code B)

Note: The B code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. By using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

- Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)

Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where pupils are attending an ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are known to be registered at another school for the session in question. Each school should only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the pupil is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course need only be placed on the registers of their main school. They should be treated as “guest pupils” at the other consortia school/s. The “host” school must have robust systems in place to monitor and report the absence and attendance of “guest pupils” and this must be shared with the main school.

Schools should ensure that in the event of a fire drill or other emergency evacuation they are able to carry out an immediate headcount as to the number of pupils physically present on-site.

13. Flexi-schooling

Head teachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents take on the responsibility for their child’s education for part of the school week. Head teachers are advised to consider any such requests from parents very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent. Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked

authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).

14. Part-time time-tables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

Guidance on part-time timetables is available at -
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

15. Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At the request from Headteachers the local authority has provided a standard letter to be handed to parents and carers to support the governing body and Headteachers in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time. This is available on
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Further information and advice of school attendance including the use of the correct registration codes is available at www.education.gov.uk

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Appendix 1

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Policy for Attendance Improvement Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised

- if the AIO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a pupil has accumulated significant amounts of authorised absence this will be discussed with the relevant member of school staff
- if it is agreed that there is a concern about the pupil's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents
- if concerns about the pupil's attendance remain, the AIO will consider asking the school to make a referral to the attendance team
- if a pupil is identified as being a persistent absentee (PA). Persistent absence is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

(Note: if a pupil's absence has been authorised by the school, the LA cannot cite that absence as evidence of non attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance