Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery

Attendance Policy 2026-2027

Statement of Intent

At Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery our Motto is 'One School One Family – Learning, Caring and Growing Together.'

Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive their entitlement of a full-time education in order for each pupil to achieve their true potential. We recognise that poor attendance can result in lower attainment, and can impact on the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. Therefore, we strive to provide a welcoming and caring environment in which each member of the school community feels wanted and safe. Staff at Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery will work alongside family members, and their children, to ensure that pupils at our school want to come to school every day and on time.

1. Aims.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through

- Developing a whole school culture and ethos with regard to promoting good attendance and punctuality
- 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.

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.

3.1 The governing board.

The governing 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.

3.2 The Headteacher.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

3.3 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.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Waddington, supported by Miss Connolly.

3.4 The Attendance Officer.

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7).
- 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 Headteacher.
- Working with Inclusion Support officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Supporting the designated senior leader in leading attendance across school.
- Completing paperwork relevant to the role such as: Child Missing in Education (CME), in year transfers, deletion from role etc.

The attendance officer is Miss Connolly and the senior attendance champion is the Headteacher.

3.5 Class teachers.

Class teachers are responsible for

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. The register for the morning session opens at 8:45 and closes at 8:55. The register for the afternoon session opens at 1pm and closes at 1:10pm. School closes at 3:15.
- promoting good attendance through supporting whole school attendance strategies
- report any patterns/absence concern to the attendance officer
- support and challenge parents with regards to a child's attendance

- Will emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality at parent's evenings.

3.6 School office staff.

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Support and challenge parents with regard to child's attendance
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Headteacher/Attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Conduct first-day call-backs/send text messages to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who is absent
- Report any concerns to the Attendance team

3.7 Parents/carers.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence on 01254 202600, or when reasonably possible, and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Keep school up to date with change to contact details
- Work with the school to ensure that they are meeting their legal duties to send their child to school

3.8 Pupils.

Pupils are expected to:

- Be an attendance HERO (Here Every Day Ready On Time)

3.9 The Lead Officer for School Attendance – Blackburn with Darwen

- The role of the Lead Officer for School Attendance is to work in partnership with school through termly meetings to monitor the impact of attendance strategies. The Lead Officer for School Attendance will offer support and guidance. Prior to the final stage, 'bridging' work can be completed by the Lead Officer for School Attendance to make a final attempt for attendance to be improved prior to the legal action process commencing. When the final stage of the attendance escalation plan has been reached, it is the responsibility of the inclusion officer to utilise legal powers to enforce school attendance.

4. Recording attendance.

4.1 Attendance register.

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once during the second session. See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record

- Whether the absence is authroised or not
- The reason for the illness
- The nature of the 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:45am and will be kept open until 8:55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence.

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form 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.

4.3 Planned absence.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. School will only authorise 1 session for a regular dental/medical appointment, all others should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality.

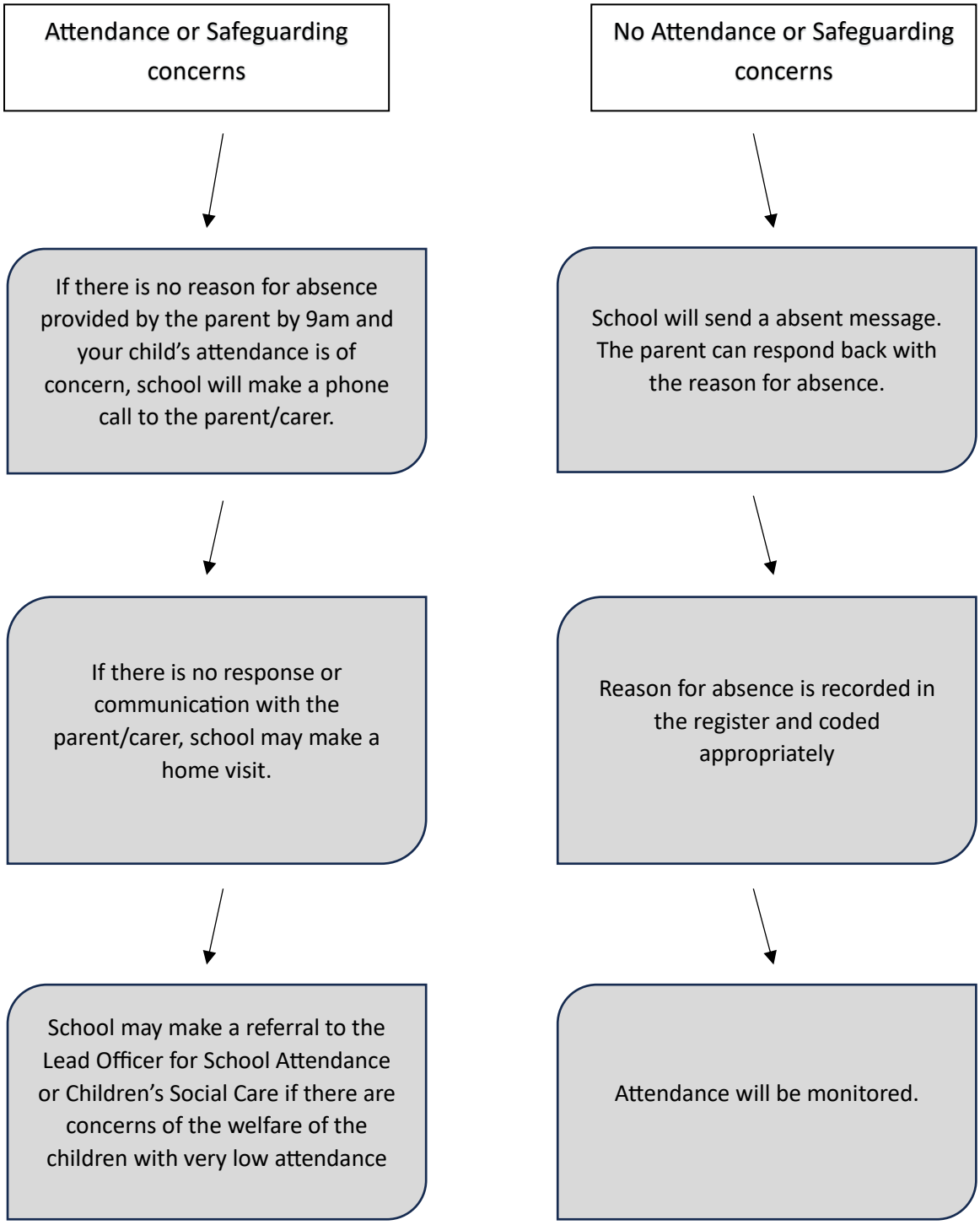
A pupil who arrives after 8:45am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Pupils who arrive after 9:15am will be marked as an unauthorised late arrival. A pupil who arrives after 8:45am is required to enter school via the school office. The office will record who is late and the time they arrive.

The Attendance team will regularly monitor punctuality and conduct phone calls when appropriate. They will also analyse data termly in relation to children who are persistently late and, alongside the designated Senior Leader for attendance, they will address any ongoing issues

4.5 Following up unexplained absence.

First day response for all absences

If your child is absent and you have not left a message on the absence line, school will:



4.6 Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing from Education (CME) In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, all staff are aware that if children go missing, this can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery knows that early intervention is key to identifying any risk and to prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future.

School are updated annually on the procedures, which are to be taken in the case of a Child Missing in Education. School are required to inform the local authority about the details of:

- All children who are believed to have moved out of the Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) geographical area after the school has undertaken reasonable enquiries (to be completed within 10 school days) and the child's whereabouts have still not been confirmed.
- Children who have been absent without the school's permission for a continued period of 10 days
- Children who have failed to return to school for 10 days beyond the expected return date following a leave of absence period
- Children who have relocated abroad
- All Gypsy Roma Traveller children who school believes have gone travelling without securing prior agreement and/or confirming a return date (see next page).
- Children who are withdrawn from school, but parents are unwilling or unable to say where or how their child will continue to be educated.

In a case of CME, the school needs to make reasonable enquires and the Attendance Team must:

- Obtain as much information as possible from parents before relocation
- Maintain contact with parents following relocation
- Confirm admission with the receiving school
- Make a home visit if possible
- Make general enquiries amongst friendship groups
- Establish contact with all named people on the child's record.

Relevant CME forms will be completed and sent to the CME inbox.

Circumstances when a CME notification is not required:

- Those children who move out of the BwD area, their whereabouts has been confirmed and they are confirmed as having started at a new school – these children will be reported to the Local Authority using a 'Deletion from School Roll Notification' form
- In 'truancy' cases where a child's unauthorised absence has already been formally referred to the Lead Officer for School Attendance; school will continue to follow their attendance / absence procedures.
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs whose absence has been verified by a health professional.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers.

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via

- Half-termly attendance reports
- Letters for attendance that meet threshold/trigger points (See escalation plan)
- Letters/texts when attendance has improved
- Informal and formal meetings when a child's attendance continues to drop.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The school may also take into account the child's attendance at that time.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include

- llness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail) although we strongly encourage that these are made outside of the school day
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty Page notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- 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 pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent, for the same child, within a rolling 3- year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days, with no option for a discounted rate.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions)

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

5.3 Education Supervision Order

An education supervision order (ESO) is a formal legal intervention once all voluntary support has been exhausted. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO.

Education supervision orders initially last for one year. The local authority will notify parents in writing of the intention to proceed to an ESO, and will set up a meeting to discuss it with the parent. Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance.

We actively encourage and promote good attendance throughout school. We treat attendance as everyone's responsibility. Some of the strategies we use for rewarding and improving attendance include:

- Celebrating class weekly attendance winners during Monday's Assembly worship. The winners receive a trophy for the week, fairy cakes and the news is shared on the school newsletter, Class Dojo and a piece of their attendance jigsaw.
    - When a class completes their picture they get an afternoon celebration activity
- Sharing weekly attendance on class dojo and Facebook
- Having a clear display for attendance in the hall celebrating good attendance
- Leaders meet and greet children at the gate at the start of the day, and teachers meet and greet children at classroom doors. We do this to ensure that all children get a positive interaction at the start of the day
- Planning engaging lessons, and ensuring there are many wider opportunities planned for the children such as a range of trips and visits, special themed days in school and outside agencies
- Children entering our weekly 100% prize for 1 lucky pupil who has been present every day from Monday to Friday each week. The draw will take place in Friday's assembly each week.
- Our Hotspot Day reward system. The rules are:
    - 10 Hotspot days will happen during each of our 3 terms. A Hotspot Day will be random and WILL NOT be announced before the day.
    - At the end of each term, the children who have attended all 10 hotspot days and on time, will go into a draw, the winning family will receive a £50 voucher.
    - The Hotspot day is only awarded if your child arrives at school and on time.
- At the end of each term, our children with attendance of 98% or more are rewarded.
    - Bronze certificates are giving to children with 98% attendance.
    - Silver certificates are given to children with 99% attendance.
    - Gold certificates are given to children with 100% attendance
- At the end of the school year our children with attendance of 96% or more are rewarded
    - Bronze certificates are giving to children with 96% - 97% attendance.
    - Silver certificates are given to children with 98% - 99% attendance.
    - Gold certificates are given to children with 100% attendance
- Holding parent workshops regarding attendance to ensure we all work together to improve attendance
- Encouraging parents through class dojo and conversations
- Sending well done messages via letters or text when attendance improves.
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School also provides a number of supporting services for attendance and punctuality:

- Breakfast club available from 7.45am
- The Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator is available to offer advice and support to parents/carers.

7. Attendance monitoring.

7.1 Monitoring attendance.

The school will:

- Monitor the attendance and absence data weekly at a class and school level.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly at an individual pupil level, and group level (Pupil Premium, SEND, Boys, Girls)
- Conduct daily/ weekly/ fortnightly/ or monthly checks as appropriate on a pupil who is causing concern and has been escalated.

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.

7.2 10 Day Absence Return

School reports to the local authority when children have 10 days unauthorized absence (consecutive) for data collection purposes.

7.3 15 Day Alerts

The DFE's 'Working Together to Improve School attendance' guidance requires all schools to provide a sickness return to the LA for all compulsory school age pupils who have been recorded with code I (illness). This alert should be made either when a pupil has had 15 days of continuous (or cumulative) absence for illness or where the school believes that they will miss 15 days because of this.

This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs. See appendix 5.

7.4 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.

7.5 Using data to improve attendance.

The school will:

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

7.4 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/carers of pupils 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

8. Monitoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies.

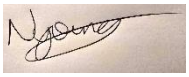
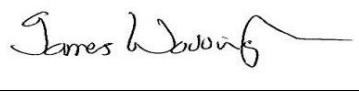
This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance – updated September 2024

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Adopted/Ratified:	Education Committee Summer Term 2026
Review Frequency:	1 Year
Review Date	Education Committee Summer Term 2027
Signed (Chair of Governors)	
Signed (Headteacher)