

Goddard Park

Community Primary School



Head of School: Jo Harding

Everybody learns, everybody cares

Attendance Policy June 2026



Approved by:	Full Governing Body	Date: 06/07/2026
Last reviewed on:	June 2026	
Next review due by:	June 2027	

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Serving the Communities of Park North, Park South & Walcot East and twinned with the Desai Memorial Primary School, Nairobi
Company Number 7351053

Attendance Policy

AIMS

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
 - Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 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

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
 - Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
 - Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
 - Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
 - Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
 - Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
 - Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
 - Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.

- Holding the head of school to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head of School Jo Harding

The head of school is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising Zoe Grove-Welsh to be able to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Zoe Grove-Welsh

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The attendance officer

Admin officer Sarah Maine, 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office By 9.00 am for morning sessions and 1.30pm for afternoon sessions.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child Page |6
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Zoe Grove-Welsh zgw@goddardpark.co.uk

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.25 and ends at 3.25. Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40 and will be kept open until 9.00. The register for the second session will be kept open until 1.30.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school admin staff, who can be contacted via 01793 342342 or by emailing admin@goddardpark.co.uk.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil 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

Our attendance team regularly monitors attendance and lateness and communicates this with parents via termly letters to understand what the causes are and to identify and support the school can put in place.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call and/or email the pupil's parent 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 will may contact the police if they are concerned for the welfare of the child.

- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: the academy will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal interventions (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels. We do this by sharing information at parents evenings, in data letters (when we have concerns) and in mid-year reports.

Authorised and Unauthorised

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad •
Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 5 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the website.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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.

If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Penalty notices

The local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

Before requesting a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, legal action can be taken.

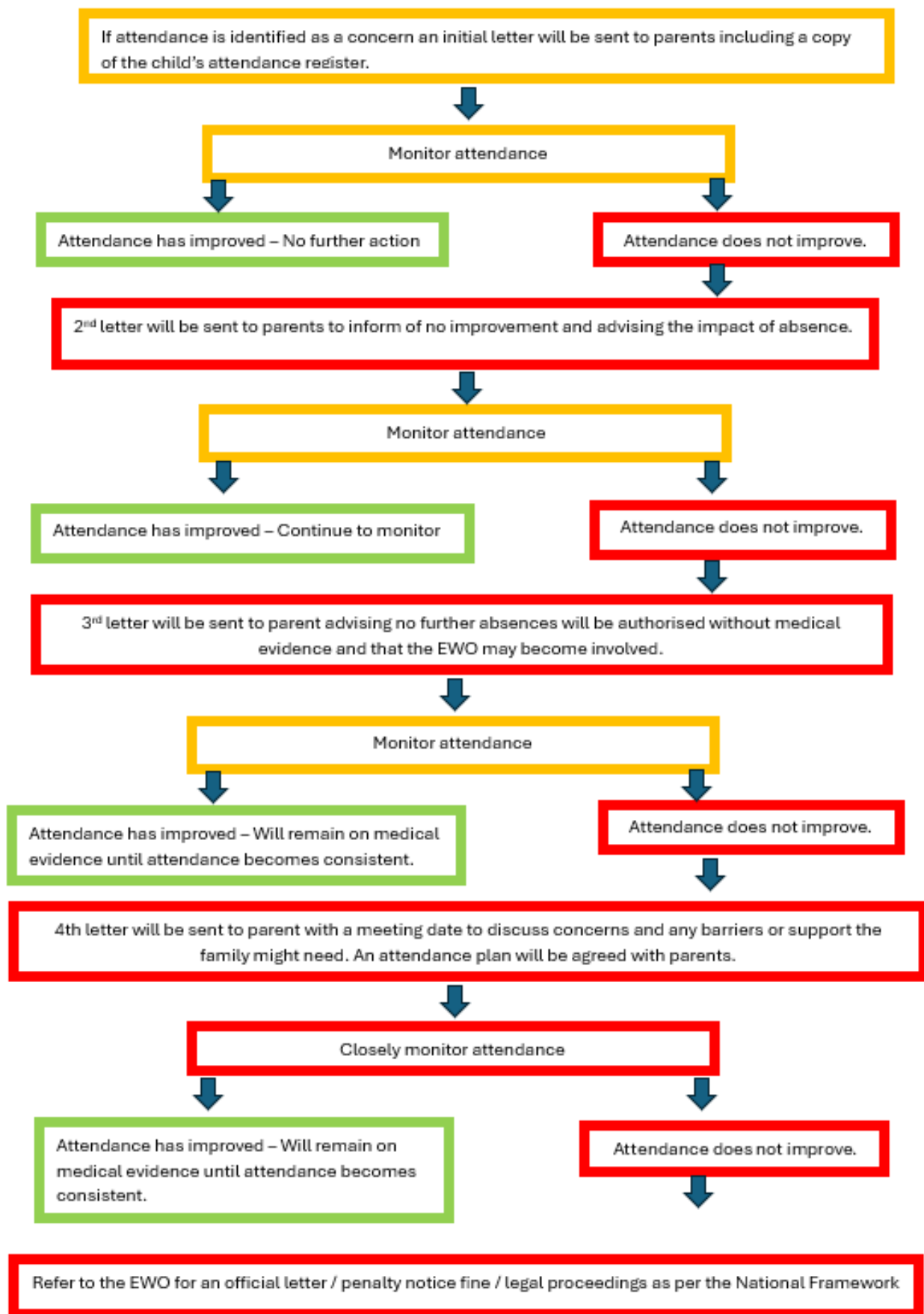
Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school. They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
 - The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
 - Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
 - A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period.
 - A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
 - The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

The flow chart below shows the actions school will take when attendance is identified as a concern.



Strategies for promoting attendance.

At Goddard Park, daily attendance of pupils is everyone's responsibility, and we work in partnership with our families to make this happen. We celebrate good attendance in assemblies and in class, if children are in school, they are able to participate fully in all of our recognition and praise schemes. We recognise the importance of nurturing the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of our children as so often poor SEMH can be a barrier for timely and daily attendance in school. We invest time into building relationships with our children and their families to fully explore their individual needs so that we can understand and remove barriers in school attendance before they start to become a bigger problem.

It is clear that daily attendance is improved by the following: •

- "Soft starts" so that children and families who struggle with coming into school are given a quiet time in which to adjust in the mornings e.g, SEMH Breakfast Club, "meet and greet" at the door, teacher welcome and entrance routines
- Support from the Nurture team
- Walking bus

Supporting pupils to return to school

At Goddard Park, our children are at the centre of all that we do and we nurture that sense of belonging within our community. Timely, daily attendance is an expectation for all our families, irrespective of their circumstances. However, we also understand that some children and their families will face different challenges at different times and we have a range of early help interventions to support our families.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Attendance Monitoring

We monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, termly and yearly basis. You can expect a daily call or text to make sure that your child is safe if you do not contact the school office by 9am on the day of the absence. We monitor patterns of absences and late marks so that we can work together with our families to put strategies and help in place before attendance or lateness becomes a problem.

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information systems so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. 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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- 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:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent

Meetings will –

- discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Zoe Grove-Welsh. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.

Attendance codes

Attendance Marks:

/ \	<i>Present at school: / morning session \ afternoon session.</i>
L	<i>Late arrival before the register is closed. This counts as a present mark.</i>
U	<i>Late arrival after registration closed - 30 Mins after registration (9.05am). This is an unauthorised absence.</i>
V	<i>When the pupil is attending a place for an educational visit or trip.</i>
M	<i>Absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.</i>
I	<i>Illness (not medical or dental appointment)</i>
C	<i>Leave of absence exceptional circumstances - agreed by head of school</i>
R	<i>Religious Observance</i>
X	<i>Absences of Non-Compulsory School age pupils who are not required to attend school</i>
E	<i>Pupils who have been Suspended or Permanently Excluded with no alternative provision made</i>
G	<i>When the school has not granted a leave of absence, and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday</i>
N	<i>When the reason for absence has not yet been established. This changes to O if no reason is provided within 5 days</i>
O	<i>when a pupil is absent in other unauthorised or unknown circumstances</i>
#	<i>whole school closures that are known and planned in advance</i>