



## Starbeck Primary Academy Policy for Attendance

Policy completed: September 2020

Approved by FGB:

Co-ordinator responsible: Sally Pitts

Date of next review: September 2021

**This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations, noted in DfE and other materials. It has been updated reflecting the government guidance 'Guidance for full opening: schools' July 2020 and 'Checklist for school leaders to support full opening: behaviour and attendance' July 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### School Context

Starbeck is an average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (29%) is above national averages (16%). The number of children from ethnic minority groups (12%) is lower than national averages (26%). The percentage of children with an Education Health Care Plan (5.3%) is above national averages (3.1%).

### Rationale

Starbeck Primary School and North Yorkshire Education Authority believe that attendance and punctuality at school are important and that absence can lead to poor progress and poor attainment. Regular and full-time attendance is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life. It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life.

### Aims

- To encourage prompt arrival at school.
- To encourage regular attendance.
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties.
- To work together with parents to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

## ATTENDANCE PLAN TO SUPPORT FULL OPENING – SEPTEMBER 2020

### Plan

Attendance will be mandatory from the start of the new school year, 8th September 2020, except where statutory exemptions apply. Guidance is followed and has been communicated to parents about when pupils should not attend due to public health or clinical advice (see guidance). School will continually review absence due to the above reasons, for example when a self-isolation period should come to an end. Pupils have access to education, either remotely or paper-based learning, and engagement is monitored.

Registers will be taken as normal and attendance codes used consistently. Registration periods will be modified to accommodate staggered start times. Further guidance for schools on recording attendance and absence is to be issued soon.

It is expected that parents will let the school know if a child is unable to attend and the reason. Pupil's parent or carer will be contacted on the first day of absence where this does not happen. It is recognised that new or more prevalent causes of absence (for example, anxiety) due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will occur. School will address each case individually, balancing reward, support for pupils and families and sanctions appropriately.

### **Communicate**

All staff, governors and trustees understand the importance of good attendance through this policy. The governing body will provide additional visibility, support and challenge.

The policy will be communicated to staff, pupils and parents as soon as possible to ensure expectations are clearly understood. Attendance expectations will be included in induction sessions with pupils and parents, newsletters and through the website.

An open dialogue will be kept with parents who need further information or reassurance on the importance and/or safety of returning to school.

### **Support**

Many pupils are likely to need some social and emotional support on their return to school. Some pupils will need extra support, such as those who have previously had poor attendance or fixed term exclusions as well as those new to the school, with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who have not engaged with school during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

School have engaged with pupils and parents and carers throughout the lockdown period to set expectations, understand concerns and build confidence. This has been achieved through online learning platforms, phone calls, home visits and emails to parents and pupils, partial reopening of school to years 6, 1 and reception and transition meetings for all other year groups.

School staff will be vigilant in identifying changes in behaviour (for example being fearful or withdrawn, aggressive or oppositional, or excessively clingy) which may be an indication of an underlying issue.

If further support is needed, staff should consider what additional support or reasonable adjustments are needed and put a plan in place to deliver it, with regular points to review.

Where children have special educational needs and disabilities, work with local services (health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place that will ensure a smooth return for pupils.

For children who have a social worker or who are otherwise vulnerable, work with social workers and other relevant services will continue to ensure the right services and support are in place. Social workers will be informed if the child does not attend in the new school year.

### **Monitor and improve**

Attendance data will be reviewed regularly, every 2 weeks for all children and more regularly for those causing a concern. This will inform early interventions.

Feedback from staff and pupils, as well as the use of data will be used to assess the effectiveness of the attendance policy and adjust provision in what is likely to be a changing context.

### **Roles & responsibilities**

#### **The School will:**

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly.

- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Early Help Service, Healthy child Team etc.).
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

**Class teachers** are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up after actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this any further – responsibility of office staff).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.

**Administration staff** are responsible for:

- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher for information about individuals.
- Contacting the child's home on the first day of absence if the parent has not contacted the school.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the families and the Early Help service.
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter.
- Informing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher on a formal and an informal basis of patterns of attendance noted.
- Promptly issuing registers and processing on a weekly basis.
- Collating attendance percentages.
- Processing and following up holiday forms.
- Providing weekly class attendance reports for use in awards assembly.

**The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Acting as a point of contact for staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from external meetings are carried out.
- Liaising with and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance.
- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases
- Promotion of attendance issues during assemblies.
- Promoting attendance so that it has a high profile in school.

**We expect the parent/carer to:**

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, **as soon as possible on the first day of the absence.**

- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and for the school to be prepared for the child's return.
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician **before** the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

### **Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality**

- All new parents are given information on attendance as their child joins the school.
- Newsletters are used to promote this aspect of school life and serve as a reminder.
- Informal and formal meetings arranged for individual parents where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Protocols to tackle poor attendance are followed in line with LA and NSAT guidance

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at Starbeck Primary Academy arrive on time every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and celebrated. In order to do this we:

- Publicise class attendance figures and award a attendance certificate for the class with best attendance on a weekly basis.
- Promote good attendance by displaying the attendance figures, weekly certificates and photographs of 100% attendance winners (including on the school website)
- Award button badges for each half term to full attenders.
- Award certificates and metal badges for each term to full attenders, culminating in an end of full school year 100% attendance award and medal.
- Award certificates for 99% attendance for a full school year.

### **Registers**

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMS. Class teachers complete a register twice daily and return it to the office. Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes. (*Appendix A - Staff Guidelines for Register Codes*).

Registers normally close at 8:50 a.m. During the COVID-19 pandemic staggered start and finish times are in operation. Lateness after the start time is classed as 'late after the register has closed' unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, absence following the death of a close member of the family. The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent or sibling is ill.
- The parent cannot get the child to school.
- The child is taken on a shopping trip.
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat.
- A child is absent due to family work patterns.
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- A child arrives after 9:20 a.m. without a satisfactory explanation.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment.

If the parent has not contacted the school once the morning registers have been sent to the office on the first day of absence, then the school will telephone the child's home to enquire about the absence.

If a child has been absent for 3 days without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the local authority about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern the family will be contacted.

- When attendance is below 92% in any term or half term, a letter will be given to families with an acknowledgement slip to be acknowledged and returned.
- When attendance is below 90% in any term or half term, a letter will be sent to families inviting them to make an appointment with school to discuss the causes of absence and plan any strategies to help increase attendance.

### **Leave of Absence**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. Applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from the school office.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

**Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

The local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if it is not paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid after 28 days, parents may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

### **Medical Appointments**

- Parents should inform the class teacher or office in writing indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Children should be collected from and returned to the school office to be signed in or out when attending medical appointments during the school day. If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

### **Public Performances**

On occasions children become involved in public performances for dance groups, theatres, modelling agencies etc.

- The Headteacher has the discretion to grant authorised absence for these events.
- The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances such as the attendance record of the child, whether the child would miss exams or any exceptional circumstances. If any child has an attendance record of less than 90% then authorisation will not be given. Permission is at the discretion of the Headteacher and may not always be granted.
- Parents must obtain a licence to perform from the employing agency. This must be submitted to the Headteacher for completion.
- A letter must also accompany the licence indicating the time out of school that the child will require to participate in the performances including time required for rehearsals.
- Parents are asked to reflect upon the affect performances would have upon their child as any absence because a child is tired after a performance will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Punctuality**

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative arrangements have been put in place to adhere to social distancing. Each year group has staggered start and finish times, alternative entrance and exit points, individual cloakrooms for each bubble and access to the classroom without the need to line-up. Additional staff will monitor during start and finish times to promote social distancing of adults and children. Refer to NSAT Full Opening of Schools (COVID-19) September Ready Pack 2020.**

- A member of staff is on duty on the playground from 8.35 a.m. Prior to that time children are not supervised and remain the responsibility of parents. Children should not arrive before 8.35 a.m. This is especially important in cold and wet weather.
- Hands up in the playground is at 8:40 a.m. Children will line up in their classes to be brought inside by their teacher. The school day begins at 8.50 a.m. when the register will be taken. Children arriving after 8.50 a.m. should report to the school office.
- Children arriving after 8.50 a.m. will be recorded as 'late'.
- The school gates are locked at 8.50 a.m. and the outer doors are closed.
- Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class. (*Appendix C - Letters*).
- If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.
- If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained.
- Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Prevention Service where relevant.

### **Monitoring**

- The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

- All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

Appendices:

Appendix A Register Codes – Guidelines for Staff

Appendix B North Yorkshire Holiday in Term Time Guidance

Appendix C Up-to-date letters to send to poor attenders/Fast track can be found at

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-attendance>

## Appendix A

### Registration

#### **New for 2020 to 2021 – not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations<sup>2</sup> governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)<sup>3</sup>
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

#### **Attendance codes**

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance), in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

Refer to the guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

### **CLASS REGISTERS**

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 states that every school must keep an attendance register, which must be available for inspection during school hours.

The law requires regular attendance. Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

There are five broad classifications in attendance registers:

- **Present:** pupil is on school premises at the time of registration
- **Approved educational activity:** pupil is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site. (Counted as present for data collection purposes)
- **Authorised absent:** pupil has the authority of the school to be absent either given in advance (e.g. hospital appointment) or afterwards (e.g. notification of illness). Parents may not authorise absence; only schools can do this.
- **Unauthorised absent:** no explanation received or unacceptable reason given.
- **Not attending** in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)



## Marking the Attendance Register

- Registers must be marked at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and sent to the front entrance hall (in the morning they should be sent with the dinner register and any money). This is important as in case of Fire they are taken to the Fire Assembly Point (the playground) to check that all pupils are accounted for.
- Every pupil should be marked at every registration as either present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, absent or not attending. Blanks should not be left.
- Absences must be recorded accurately using the appropriate codes (see inside register).
- Manual registers must be marked in ink (not pencil) and it is recommended by the LA to use consistent colour coding to distinguish presence from absence, i.e. the use of a black diagonal line to denote presence and a red circle for absence with the appropriate code. Any correction should be made so that the original entry and the correct entry are clearly visible.
- Once an explanation for absence has been received and accepted it is important that the register is updated.
  - Registers are kept open for 30 minutes from the beginning of registration

## Lateness

North Yorkshire LA recommends that the following procedures should apply:

- If a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be marked as “late” but counted as present for that session.
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, i.e. after 9.20 a.m., and provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as authorised absent for that session.
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as unauthorised absent for that session.
- If a pupil arrives late having missed registration, they must go to the front entrance for marking in the register. (This is important for emergency purposes.)

## Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

**Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm**

Present in school during registration.

### Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

## **Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity**

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

### **Code B: Off-site educational activity**

This 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. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

### **Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. 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.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but only when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

### **Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

### **Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

### **Code V: Educational visit or trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

### **Code W: Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

### **Authorised Absence from School**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

### **Code H: Holiday authorised by the school**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

## **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

## **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

## **Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

## **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families 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 educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

## **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

### **Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give 11 retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner.

Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

### **Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

### **Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X.

### **Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care<sup>12</sup> or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

### **Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

### **Code X: Not required to be in school**

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

### **Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a 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.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

### **Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable 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.

### **Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

## Appendix B

### Holidays in Term Time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from your child's school. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

**Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

The local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if it is not paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid after 28 days, parents may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.