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## WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

### EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

AUGUST 2024

(next review August 2025)

This guidance may be reviewed prior to August 2025 in light of changes to CME processes expected in the summer of 2024

## **Working Together to Improve Attendance**

### **Expectations of Schools**

Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. While regular school attendance is predominantly the responsibility of parents and carers, schools play a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. This includes taking a positive and proactive role in the promotion of regular school attendance through strategies identified within the school attendance policy that will engage families. It is important that Governors take a key role in promoting good attendance when approving this policy.

Good school attendance should be the norm within your school. Parents should be expected to bring their child to school, on time for every session they are well enough to attend and should notify you in advance of any planned term time absence, requesting permission for the absence to be authorised. Where the absence is due to an emergency, contact should be expected on the first day of absence, with regular contact until the child is well enough to return.

This document provided by the NHS is a useful guide to establish whether a child can attend with the presenting illness, and if not, the length of time they should be absent for. This can be referred to by staff within school and shared with parents/carers in person, via your school website and/or via other communication channels. [sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk](https://www.sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk)

### **Expectations for Schools**

In line with the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance that became statutory 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 schools are expected to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- 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.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support. and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Facilitate effective working across the local authority area, schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school.

## Top Tips

To improve persistent and severe absentees requires persistent work!

Support, support, support. Ensure your first letters or contacts with a family are supportive and encourage working together. Capture their reasons, and the barriers and work together with the parent/carer and child to create reasonable adjustments and provide support.

Routinely apply a robust system that includes incentives, rewards, and consequences (ensure that these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils). The key here is to be consistent with your approach.

Ensure attendance is discussed at parents' evenings, provide, and use an attendance certificate to highlight good/poor attendance. Consider using missed days/sessions/lessons rather than percentages to reiterate the amount of lost learning.

Ensure good internal communication/meetings encompassing safeguarding, SEN, behaviour, attendance to facilitate robust APDR

Follow local authority codes of conduct, policies, and procedures such as the Attendance Response (contained within this document)

All Schools should have:

- An Attendance Champion (who is a member of SLT)
- A designated linked Attendance Governor
- A member of staff responsible for first day calling

Some schools will also have:

- A school-based attendance officer / Education Welfare Officer

For the purpose of this document, we will refer to all staff members with responsibility for the first day calling, whole school attendance and Education Welfare as 'School Based Attendance Officers'.

## The Role of the Attendance Champion

Every school, including maintained, academies, free schools, faith schools and private schools must have a designated Attendance Champion. The attendance champion must be a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The attendance champion is responsible for ensuring everyone works together to improve attendance and creates a whole school ethos of 'Every School Day Matters'.

The attendance champion will meet termly with their linked Inclusion and Attendance Specialist. The purpose of this Targeted Attendance Support Meeting will be to discuss:

- The school improvement plan objectives linked to attendance
- The targets and outcomes identified in the school attendance action plan
- The whole school and cohort level attendance data
- Pupils who have not attended in the last 3 weeks or more with no genuine reason for absence
- Pupils considered to be severely absent (less than 50%)
- Pupils with an EHCP plan and more than 10% unauthorised absence
- Where time allows, pupils considered to be the persistent absentees (90% or less)
- Next steps for the school to progress towards excellence in attendance

It is mutually beneficial for schools to work together to ensure consistent approaches, share information, and work collaboratively. The Local Authority will provide regular opportunities for schools to come together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice. These will be held citywide and by locality.

## **Local Authority offers to Schools**

Once schools have exhausted all voluntary support and have considered formalising the support through an attendance contract, they should work with the Local Authority to consider next steps to improving whole school, cohort and individual pupils' attendance. The school can expect the Local Authority to:

- **Rigorously track local attendance data**

Attendance data packs for schools are provided to all school's half termly through the Sheffield Data Hub. The data is broken down into whole school and cohort with comparisons to locality, and national attendance figures. This data will be discussed with all schools during their termly targeted support meetings.

- **School Attendance Support Team** (in Sheffield this team are known as the Inclusion and Attendance Team)

- **Communication and Advice**

Networking sessions will be held termly, training will be offered, guidance updates and sharing of good practice will be shared with all schools through the Education and Skills newsletters.

- **Targeted Support Meetings**

These will be held termly with the attendance champion, with other school staff members welcome to join. Whole school, cohort and pupil level discussions will take place for those who are severely or persistently absent.

- **Multi-Disciplinary Support for families**

Using the mapping over education, health and care schools will identify the barriers to attendance and intervene early to ensure appropriate support/referrals are provided.

- **Legal Intervention**

Prosecution is used as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate. Where unauthorised absence continues to be a concern after schools have followed the expectations places upon them, they should liaise with their linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker to consider next steps.

- **Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker**

Good school attendance provides an additional safeguard for vulnerable pupils. It is therefore important that pupils with a social worker are identified, supported, and have their attendance considered at every opportunity. Schools are expected to notify the child's social worker of any unexplained absence, as part of the first day call. Attendance is expected to be on every child's plan, and where attendance of a child with a social worker remains a concern consultation will take place to ensure next steps are considered and adhered to.

The team can be contacted at: [SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:SheffieldInclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk)

Further information: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## The Attendance Response

### Desired Outcome

**For every child to be in school every day, and on time.**

To reach this outcome, we must support all children.

We need to support our 100% attenders to remain 100% attenders.

We need to support our 96%-99% attenders to raise their attendance and get as close to 100% as possible.

We need to challenge our 92%-96% attenders, to remind parents of their duty to ensure their child is in full time education and offer support to prevent further absences in the future.

And we need to follow a graduated approach for our irregular attenders to ensure we assess why they are not attending regularly, create a plan to support improvement in attendance, implement the plan and review to see if improvements have been made.



### Assess

The reason preventing the child attending regularly

The needs across Education, Health and Care

Has the child's voice been captured, what do they need to happen so they can attend?

What has already been implemented to improve the child's attendance?

What support is required to improve the attendance?

What interventions may be required to improve the child's attendance?

What further assessments may be required?

Set time scales for assessments to be carried out

### Plan (Voluntary Support)

What next steps need to take place to help the young person attend every day, on time?

Who will support and what their actions are?

Set time scales for the plan to be implemented

What outcomes do we expect to see?

Ensure the plan is shared with all parties including the child

### Do

The plan is carried out by all professionals, the family, and the young person

### Review

Has the support worked, does the child and family feel they have been supported?

Are we seeing movement towards the desired outcomes, even small improvements can be big steps?

Has there been any party who hasn't carried out their actions?

Has the child's voice been captured, how do they feel the last few weeks have gone, what difference has been made, what are they proud of, what could have been better?

### Consider Formalising Support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with consider formalising support through use of an attendance contract (see attendance contract section within this document)

If none engagement from the family, speak to your linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker



## Ideas for challenging and improving attendance Checklist

Completed first day telephone calls/home visits	
Letters sent to share attendance concern and has the assess/plan/do review process been started	
Have you spoken to the form tutor/head of year/pastoral manager?	
Have they spoken to the child during registration times?	
Has the absence, and/or lateness been highlighted in the child's planner?	
Have you or any other staff member met the child outside of form/tutor time to capture the child's voice to establish a reason and put support in place	
Have you met with the parents/carers and asked why the child isn't attending school? Do these reasons match with the reason the child provided?	
Have family circumstances been considered and have you considered with the family what support may help them at this time? Have any referrals to other agencies been offered?	
If regularly late, has the school start time been shared with parents. Have you provided them with an alarm clock/used a sticker chart etc	
Would the child benefit from attending breakfast club to ensure they are on school site on time each day?	
Checked to see if siblings are having the same absences. Have you contacted the school the siblings attend? If unsure which schools, ask your linked I&A Specialist.	
Have you spoken to other staff members to ascertain any other reasons for absence? Look at the patterns on 'by-lesson attendance', and if patterns are evident speak to those teachers.	
Is the child a Young Carer, and is this having an impact on their attendance?	
Have ACES/Trauma been considered?	
Consider if there are any unmet learning needs, does a one-page profile/MyPlan need to be put in place?	
If a MyPlan/EHCP in place are the outcomes being supported, when was this last reviewed?	
Has the child's health been considered, have you received any medical evidence	
If external services are involved has a meeting taken place? E.g., TAF, CIN, PEP, Transition Pathway meetings	
Where appropriate have you consulted with the linked I&A Specialist for support and advice	
Has a good attendance improvement plan been drawn up, and are the pupil and family aware of the plan?	

## Mapping across Education, Health and Care

When meeting with the pupil and the family members it is important to capture:

- What's going well – give some praise and encouragement
- What are we worried about – be open and honest, what are the concerns
- What are the next steps?

For each of these 3 areas, think about the child's education, health, and care needs. By breaking it down into these 3 areas you will see the predominant factors preventing this child from being in school, every day on time. You will also be able to identify the most appropriate next steps. A referral to FIS or parenting would be appropriate for a child with lots of care needs, however this wouldn't be appropriate for a child with Health issues preventing them from attending.

Scaling questions are also very useful to monitor and track changes. A question like:

“On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being definitely, how confident do you feel that you will be able to attend school every day next week and on time?”

This mapping document may be useful to complete when meeting with a young person and/or their parents.



Plan Mapping Across  
Education and Care Fc



EHC  
mapping\_help\_sheet.c

## Formalising the Support

Attendance is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing. All parties should work together to offer voluntary support to address the symptoms and bring about change. Where this voluntary support is not leading to improved attendance or engagement with education, consideration should be given to formalising the support.

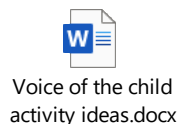
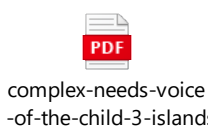
Schools are expected to meet with the parents, child and any other agencies involved to consider formalising the support through an attendance contract. Attendance contracts are a formal written agreement between a parent and the school. In some instances, this will be a formal agreement between the parent and the Local Authority.

A contract is not legally binding and is not a punitive tool. It is intended to provide a formal route to secure engagement with support where voluntary engagement has not brought about change. An attendance contract may not be appropriate but should always be explored.

If an attendance contract is in place and not being adhered to, the school should contact their linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker to consider next steps.

Schools should use the standard Sheffield attendance contract template (see appendix). Where schools/academies chose to use an alternative format all elements within the Sheffield contract must be included.

There is no minimum or maximum duration to an attendance contract, reviews should take place regularly with next steps considered at each review.



## Enforcing Support

### When all voluntary and formal support has been exhausted Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker (AISW) support schools with the attendance legal process

All schools have a link AISW from the attendance legal team. In the absence of your link worker, please contact [attendlegal@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:attendlegal@sheffield.gov.uk)

Prosecution is the last resort, and we support schools to provide the child and family with help and assistance in accessing their education wherever we can. We expect that the child and parent voice is captured throughout the process as situations can change, as this may change the response and support offered. Our aim is to ensure that the school has exhausted all avenues of support before considering the legal route.

The link AISW will require the school to have undertaken certain measures **PRIOR** to considering legal prosecution for attendance, as follows:

ALP checklist	Yes/No	Is Evidence Available
School to have referred to the Ideas for challenging and improving attendance Checklist and completed the identified actions relevant to the situation		
Child to be discussed at whole school inclusion meeting this may include wider school staff, safeguarding, SEN, Pastoral, Attendance, and any other relevant staff to ensure any barriers are discussed at a whole school level regarding attendance, well-being, behaviour and learning		
School to ensure they have spoken to all services involved with the child or young person		
Schools to establish any siblings and liaise with those schools		
Mapping across education, health, and care to identify need and barriers		
A plan that demonstrates APDR with SMART targets (see attached doc)		
Parents to be given the opportunity to attend at least <b>two meetings</b> within the APDR process		
Any meetings recorded and parents provided with a copy whether they are present or not setting out expectations/plan		

Where appropriate ensure evidence of the impact irregular attendance has on child's learning is discussed with parent/carer		
Schools to formalise support by way of an attendance contract, if not appropriate school must provide their rationale		
Parent voice captured and recorded		
Child voice captured and recorded		
School to ensure all parents/carers with day-to-day care have been informed of any attendance issues and the legal duties placed upon them to provide a full-time education		
School to ensure all parent/carer details are up to date (who is in the household? Do both parents have parental responsibility/day to day care and responsibility for education? If so, on which days?)		
School to demonstrate how they have considered where the family live in relation to school and show what support has been offered if this is a barrier		

**Based on the measures school have undertaken the AISW will assess the evidence provided to establish if parent/carer has failed in their duty to educate, and whether legal intervention is appropriate or not.**

**PLEASE:**

- Ensure a RTT is **NOT** in place as legal will not be pursued; this is seen as support still being required.
- Ensure you are working whole family and have contacted siblings' schools for attendance related information, if appropriate invite to any meetings.
- Offer parents the opportunity to attend at least **two meetings** within the APDR process.
- Ensure that you use the letters and proformas within this document otherwise cases may not be pursued.
- Send all paperwork via anycomms within the specified time frames provided by your linked AISW.
- Ensure all paperwork is correct as incorrect paperwork will not be processed
  - Have you calculated the sums correctly on the Head Teachers Certificate?
  - Attendance Registers should be with comments
  - Copies of any correspondence sent to parents is included.
  - APDR process is evident within a plan
- Ensure any plan is reviewed on a regular basis – without drift or delay.

If your school is considering the legal prosecution route for attendance you should always bear in mind **statutory defenses** prior to progression and as part of your APDR process.

All decisions regarding legal proceedings will be made by the **Attendance & Inclusion Social Worker** linked to your school. The Statutory Defences (reasons why cases would not be progressed through the legal system) are as follows.

1. Authorised Absence - Leave granted by the Head teacher
2. Sickness - or any other unavoidable cause. Evidence presented will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
3. Religious Observance - Any day that is exclusively set aside

4. Distance from School - The school that the child is registered is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for either transport to and from school or enabling him/her to become a registered pupil at a school nearer his/her home. (Walking distance - Exceeding 2 miles for a child under 8 years old, exceeding 3 miles for a child aged 8 years and over)

5. Trade or business - The parent/carer can show that their trade or business requires them to travel, that the child has attended school as regularly as the nature of the trade or business allows and the child has attended school for at least 200 sessions during the preceding 12 months.

## **ATTENDANCE LEGAL DOCUMENTATION**

The Local Authority, in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate), will be responsible for the decision to issue Notice to improve and any other legal intervention as deemed appropriate. This will ensure consistent practice across **all** schools in Sheffield, assist in avoiding school / home conflicts and ensure that Notices to improve are not being issued where it is inappropriate to do so, or where the Local Authority would be unable to support progression to court or a different course of action is more appropriate.

### **Paperwork required from school includes (as a minimum).**

- ALP checklist
- Head teacher's Certificate covering the period of complaint only
- Case Summary or Witness Statement formatted as a chronology covering the period of complaint as directed by AISW
- Evidence of the Attendance Response being followed to include:
  - Mapping document
  - Child voice
  - Adult voice
  - Internal meeting minutes/discussion
  - Meetings offered
  - Any Plan
  - Any correspondence sent to parent/carer
  - An up-to-date attendance register (with comments)

All proformas required are contained within this document and **SHOULD** be used, this is to provide consistency across the city.

This information would prove that during the period of complaint, the parents/carers were aware of the child's poor attendance and that all voluntary and formalising of support has been exhausted.

School based attendance officers should continue the APDR cycles and continue to monitor attendance during and following any legal intervention to ensure changes are sustained, or any decline is explored in a timely manner. If further support is identified and a legal process is being pursued, you **MUST** speak to your AISW.

Attendance and Inclusion social workers will assess cases on a case-by-case basis, following voluntary and formal support offers, to make decisions as to what, if any, legal intervention is appropriate using the range of legal powers available to us. These will be discussed during attendance meetings and assessed based on the evidence provided, as to how the parent/carer is failing in their duty to ensure a full-time suitable education for their child.

## Submitting Paperwork to the Local Authority

All paperwork should be sent via Anycomm's, using the drop-down box for Attendance Legal.

Requests for Irregular Attendance prosecution should be accompanied by request for legal proceedings form attached:



Requests for Legal Proceedings - Schools

## Consultation

Consultation with a linked Inclusion & Attendance Specialist, or Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker can be requested at any time, directly with the worker or through the [Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk) inbox.

Consultations are also available with the Inclusion and Attendance team regarding Exclusions, Transition, Group Work, Mentoring, Educational Engagement, Sleep, Restorative Practice, Reintegration and Behaviour. To request a wider consultation, speak to your linked Team Leader or Specialists within the transition pathways teams, or email [Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk)

## Family Intervention Service (FIS)

FIS will liaise with school regarding families/children they are working with where attendance is a concern. FIS will close cases where there is non engagement. If parents refuse to engage or stop engaging this evidence can be used during your conversations with your linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker.

During, or towards the end of a piece of support, if it is felt by the team around the child that attendance legal is likely to be the next step to bring about change, we would ask you (the school) to liaise with your linked Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker to **consider** escalation to the attendance legal process. FIS should provide evidence of their involvement, support and interventions as part of your evidence.

FIS workers will not request legal intervention, this will come from school as an action from multi-agency meetings.

## **Support around different reasons for absence**

### **Attending the school**

#### **L – Late (before registration has closed)**

Some pupils may come into school after the register has been taken but before the register closes. This should not be a frequent pattern.

#### **Support/Challenges**

- A school policy must reflect the start and finish times of the day and how the codes will be used and what measures will be put in place to support punctuality
- Meeting to be held with the parent/carer (and pupil if appropriate) to ascertain the reasons for the lateness and if any support can be offered
- 1-1 with the child to ascertain the reasons and what support can be offered
- Is this due to sleep issues? Does the parent need to enrol on a sleep hygiene programme? Does the parent need support with the morning routines, do they need a parenting programme?
- Does the parent/carer and child know the times of the school day
- Would a sticker chart support in getting the pupil to school on time?
- Establish if the child is a young carer and make a referral if the child and parent agree.
- Establish if there are siblings at different schools, liaise with the other schools the reasons given for lateness. Are there difficulties getting the children to the different locations, does a breakfast club/ after school club need to be explored?
- Is SEN behaviour an issue, does the parent need support from outside Agencies around this, such as the parenting team, ADHD nurses, ASD team.

### **Attending a place other than the school**

#### **K – Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority**

- The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).

#### **V – Educational visit or trip**

This is to be used for school organised trips and visits, including residential. This code can also be used for Y6 pupils if met in primary school and taken on to their next school (usually secondary school).

#### **Support/Challenges**

- Where a parent takes responsibility in taking their child to a transition day this would be a B code. As would children making their own way to transition days.
- If a parent takes the child to the school trip/residential and picks them up again this would also be coded V.
- For children attending a school visit for a proportion of the school day, the registration marks would not need to be changed to V.

Children attending swimming lessons as part of the curriculum should receive their registration mark/s prior to travel to the swimming pool and therefore would not need to be coded as V

## **P – Participating in a sporting activity**

This activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the Headteacher of the school. The pupil must be taking part in the activity and is taking place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

### **Support/Challenges**

- Has school seen evidence of the activity taking place?
- School should speak to parents, the relevant authorised person and sport's, national governing body regarding the appropriateness of the activity taking place, in school hours, and the time to travel to the establishment.
- Consult with your linked A&I Officer if you are unsure if the sporting activity is approved or not.
- Details for the National Governing Body associated with the particular sport can be found online, or through request to the club or affiliation the child belongs.
- Children participating in off school site sporting activities arranged by the school or the local school sports partnership should be P coded unless the child is present in school for the registration period prior to the activity.

## **W – Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience as part of the pupil's education.

### **Support/Challenges**

- School must check on the attendance of a pupil (Y10 and Y11) who is on work experience and mark the register accordingly
- Where a work experience placement has broken down or not been provided the children are expected to be in school and work to be provided.

## **B – Educated Off Site**

Some children and young people may attend sessions off school site at an approved provider, or with another educational professional. This should be a short-term intervention to support the children return to full time education in school. Contact should be made with the provider each morning/afternoon registration period to establish if they have attended, and first day calling must be carried out for pupils who are absent. Further contact should be made in an afternoon if the child stays all day unless an agreement has been made with the provider to notify you if the child leaves the site.

Alternative Provision should be a short-term intervention to support re-engagement with education in the classroom. To ensure children continue to feel they belong at their named school they should continue to be offered sessions in school each week. If a child is only attending one Alternative Provision each week, they must be expected to attend school for the other days, otherwise the provider could be considered an unregistered school.

This code can also be used for some health clinics/programmes. E.g., Diabetes Education Programme, Ryegate and CAMHS (although assessment appointments must be coded as 'M')

### **Support/Challenge**

- Work with the provider to review the MyPlan, to establish if the provision is engaging the young person in their education – if not does the provision need withdrawing and other support putting in place
- Contact your linked A and I Officer to discuss where a 'B' code would be appropriate to support pupils with their health care appointments/plans

## **D -Dual Registration**

Some children and young people may attend sessions off school site at another school setting. This could be a short-term intervention to support the children to return to full time education in school. First day calling must be carried out by the school the child is due to attend on that day.

This code can also be used for Traveller children where they are attending another school for a short period.

School-age pregnant girls will be offered group mentoring support and education for a contact period of up to 16 weeks around the time of the baby's birth. This is delivered through the Becton Outreach Service. The curriculum offer is for a total of 16 weeks of education, generally from week 36 of the pregnancy. When a pupil is receiving education through Becton Outreach the home school will Dual Register. Further support for pregnant teenagers can be accessed from the school nursing team, Sheffield Futures, <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolageparents/>

### **Support/Challenge**

- Regular contact/communication with the other registered school is paramount, agree which school is going to chase up any absences on the day that the pupil attends that school
- Regular meetings/contact to ascertain if the provision is working for the pupil and if any further support needs to be put in place

## **Absent – leave of absence**

### **C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance**

There may be occasions when the Headteacher authorises the absence of a child for a reason not covered by any other code, for example a funeral or bereavement. This would be coded as 'C'.

### **Pregnant pupils**

Leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Ultimately, it is at the school's discretion how much leave to grant.

### **C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.**

All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only do so in the following circumstances (under regulation 11(2)):

- Where the local authority has granted a licence for the pupil to take part in a performance regulated by section 37(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963.
- Where a pupil does not need a licence for such a performance because an exception applies under section 37(3) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, including where a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) covering the pupil has been issued by the local authority in whose area the performance will take place or the Secretary of State.
- Where a Justice of the Peace has given the pupil a licence to go abroad for a performance or other regulated purpose under section 25(2) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Contact the Local Authority child employment and licencing team on 01142037442 or [childpermits&licences@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:childpermits&licences@sheffield.gov.uk) for further information.

## **C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable**

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

Children must attend for at least 1 hour of each session to receive a present mark. All reduced timetables should be for no more than 8 weeks, unless the child's treatment plan from their consultant suggests otherwise, and work should be set for the child to avoid them falling behind with their learning.

### **Support/Challenge**

- Are the absences due to family circumstances, does a referral form for support from outside agencies need to be completed
- Is the child a Young Carer, and if so, has a referral been made and support identified?
- Safeguarding officer to liaise with the Young Carer, their parent and their Young Carers worker (if involved) to formulate a plan of support and to consider further support from the GP or health professionals around home help
- Reduced timetables should be a short-term intervention of no more than 8 weeks, with reviews every 2 weeks.
- Schools must notify the Local Authority if a child is attending on a reduced timetable, regardless of the attendance coding. Schools must also notify the LA when the timetable ends.
- If this code is used for a pupil who is 'flexi schooling' do you have a plan in place with parents/carers for that pupil returning to school full time

## **J1 – Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.**

Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence, under regulation 11(4), where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence) and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

### **Support/Challenges**

- Have you seen proof of the interview and been given notice of the pupil attending?
- Pupils to attend school either side of the appointment/ interview.
- Establish if the pupils need any support prior to the visit/ interview such as clothing, travel, money, preparation and managing stress/ anxiety.
- Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, or admission to another educational establishment.

## **M – Medical/Dental appointments**

These are attendance at G.P. Surgeries, dental and hospital appointments. If the child is present for registration, they receive a present mark and a comment should be added to show the time the child leaves school to attend the appointment.

## **Support/Challenges**

- Encourage parents to make routine appointments out of school times where possible.
- Encourage parents to bring children into school, either before the appointment or after it, or preferable before and after.
- Has proof of the appointment been seen?
- If a child is having an operation, they get an M code, then they get an I code for the recovery period advised by the medical professionals.

## **S – Study leave**

This code should be used sparingly for Y11 pupils during public exams.

## **Support/Challenges**

- Provision should still be made for those pupils that wish to revise on school site. Pupils revising on school site would receive a present mark and therefore schools need to arrange a place for pupils to receive their registration.

## **X – Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children (under or over compulsory school age) are not expected to attend.

## **Support/challenges**

- Can be used for a short period of time at the start of the school year for all reception age pupils as part of the settling in process
- Can be used for pupils in reception who are attending school on an agreed reduced timetable up to the time they become compulsory school age.
- Not to be used for children who are compulsory school age or for exclusions.

## **Absent – other authorised reasons**

### **E – Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made**

If a pupil breaches the school behaviour policy the Headteacher may issue a fixed term exclusion for a period of half to 5 days. For serious breaches of the school behaviour policy the Headteacher may issue a permanent exclusion. If a pupil has received a permanent exclusion the Local authority will arrange for the education of the child from the 6<sup>th</sup> school day.

## **Support/Challenge**

- Has the pupil got a one-page profile/MyPlan in place? No - does one need starting? Yes - does this need reviewing early in light of the exclusions?
- Has a Boxall profile been completed to identify any needs?
- Are further assessments needed from speech and language, the Ed Psych etc.
- Are there outside factors influencing the pupil's behaviour – does this need a referral to other services e.g., Health, FIS, Young carers, CYT etc
- Are there any unmet learning needs?
- Contact the Suspensions Team (Sarah Kelly and Genine Nuttall) for support or advice regarding a pupil who has exclusions and who you may be considering for Primary or Secondary Inclusion Panel, or a managed move
- For nursery and FS2 pupils who are struggling to engage in their learning contact the 'transition to school readiness' Pathway Team for advice via a consultation

- For primary and secondary aged pupils, you can contact the Transition Pathway team within Inclusion and Attendance for advice via a consultation
- The Attendance and Inclusion team can also support with advice and offer 'critical friend' support to the Headteacher if a pupil has been permanently excluded
- Schools should consider arranging a governors behaviour meeting when a child accumulates 45 sessions of 'E' codes, or when a pupil is identified as at severe risk of permanent exclusion to see what support can be put in place
- Consider referrals to external agencies for support and advice, e.g., Outreach, Autism team, Educational Psychologist etc.,
- Has a managed move been considered?
- After a fixed term exclusion, a reintegration meeting needs to be put into place when the child is welcomed back into school. A plan needs to be put in place and reviewed, if the plan is not working for the pupil, other alternatives will need to be considered to support the pupil's behaviour.
- Has the voice of the child been sought, to support the behaviour plan and the reintegration meeting?
- It is not acceptable to ask the parent to collect the child during lunch time or collecting early as a plan to manage a child's behaviour. This is considered as an unlawful exclusion. Other support measures and plans must be considered to manage the child's behaviour during school hours.

### **I – Illness (not medical or dental appointment)**

The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.

In most cases of illness, a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be sufficient to authorise the absence without question or concern.

Schools should authorise the absence using code I, unless they believe the reason provided does not constitute the child needing to be absent from school, or the school have reason to believe the parent is not giving an accurate reason for absence.

Schools should refer to NHS guidance to understand the number of days the pupil needs to be absent for the reason provided.

Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. If there are patterns, trends or persistent periods of absence due to illness this should be discussed with the parent as soon as possible.

If there is any doubt about the authenticity of the illness, schools can record as unauthorised. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absences due to repeated bouts of illness, but Doctors' notes **must not** be requested for children.

When a child has been absent for 15 or more days in a school year due to Illness the school should discuss this with the Local Authority during their Termly Targeted Support Meeting, to consider the appropriate next steps (see Education for Children Unable to Attend Policy).

### **Support/Challenge**

- Have you seen medical evidence – letter, text, dated medication?
- Is a meeting needed with health care professionals/ other agencies?
- Has the child got a health/ medical care plan in place?
- Does the family need support in seeking medical help, i.e., contacting GP, attendance cert for proof of illness and how this is affecting the child's attendance/education?

- Do you need to be considering starting to unauthorise any future absences?
- G.P protocol can be discussed with the link A&I Officer
- If a parent shares their child is unable to attend due to medical needs and this will exceed 15 days, please refer to the Children unable to attend policy, and jointly consider next steps during your Termly Attendance Support Meeting.
- Does a Reduced timetable need to be considered for a short period of time?
- Frequent authorised absences should be challenged to establish if further support needs to be put in place, or whether a punitive route needs to be followed.
- Schools should challenge illnesses at the first instance, when informed of illness and through first day calling. At this point minor ailments should be discussed, and parents should be informed that their children can attend school if appropriately medicated.
- Secondary schools should monitor patterns of illness, where pupils end up in the medical room on regular occasions.
- Schools to be mindful of absences related to the female menstrual cycle, including period poverty. Schools need to be meeting with these children and looking at putting a plan in place on how they can support them. The absence should be challenged and code appropriately, such as O, C, or I code.
- Advice around general illness can be found at <https://sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/>

## **R – Religious Observance**

In Sheffield we are fortunate to have a variety of religious organisations which mean on occasion a pupil may need to take religious observance during the school week. Any additional days taken that are not exclusively set aside for religious observance are not to be marked as 'R'

As a rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code.

### **Support/Challenges**

- Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice of any religious observance taking place
- School should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day aside for religious observance
- There is no set number of days for religious observance.
- Schools may consider using one of their inset days for a religious observance to which a high proportion of the school community will be observing.

## **T – Parent travelling for occupational purposes**

The pupil is a mobile child, and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business.

Schools should not unnecessarily ask for proof that the parent is travelling for occupational purposes, this should only happen when there are genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. If there is doubt over the reason given, the school may ask for proof that the family are required to travel for occupational purposes during the period of absence.

Dual registration is allowed if the child will be attending other school/s during the period of travel. Children cannot be taken off roll at the base school whilst away travelling.

### **Support/Challenges**

- School can ask for evidence when families are travelling for work. Such as contracts, or Showman Guild certificate.
- School should encourage parents/carers to enrol the child/ children at another school near their place of work. Please see the D code for advice on this.
- The child/children should be T coded until they start attending the school setting near their place of travel, at which point the D code would be used.

### **Absent – unauthorised absence**

#### **G – Family Holiday (NOT agreed or in excess of agreement)**

Parents must apply for leave in advance of taking a holiday during school time. If parents do not apply for leave or you find out via social media e.g. Facebook, relative in school etc. then this is also 'G' coded as regulations **do not** allow schools to give retrospective approval.

#### **Support/Challenge**

- Are parents aware that they need to complete a holiday request form – is it readily available in school/online
- Do you need to have a meeting with the parent to discuss attendance and how taking a holiday will affect this and their child's education?
- Is the holiday around other unauthorised absences – speak to attendance link or AISW
- Where the head teacher has not agreed the period of leave, a request must be submitted to the LA to issue a Penalty Notice
- If pupils go on holiday and do not give a return date and there has not been any communication with parents, do you need to refer to CME

#### **U – Late (after registration has closed)**

DFE states that registers **MUST** be closed within 30 minutes after the start of the session, registers should not be left open for the whole session and U codes **MUST** be used. Regular 'U' codes can be a safeguarding issue particularly where the child is arriving just in time for lunch. These need to be addressed early, so that support can be put into place if needed.

#### **Support/Challenge**

- A school policy that reflects the start and finish times of the day and how the codes will be used
- Schools should actively discourage late arrivals, be alert to patterns of late arrival
- Meeting to be held with the parent/carer to ascertain the reasons for the lateness and if any support can be offered
- Are there wider family issues, such as the child being a Young Carer, adult mental health, bereavement, SEN. With older children, is there issues with them travelling to school, grooming, contextual safeguarding to be considered etc.
- 1-1 with the child to ascertain the reasons and what support can be offered
- Is this due to sleep issues? Does the parent need to enrol on a sleep hygiene programme?
- Does the parent/carer and child know the times of the school day
- School to follow attendance processes, is a SAP needed?
- First day calling must take place, for safeguarding reasons, such as informing the parent/ carers that the child hasn't arrived yet.

- Could an alarm clock be offered to the family?
- Does travel to and from school need to be considered?

## **N – No reason yet provided for absence**

Sometimes parents/carers do not inform school the reason for their child's absence.

This code should not be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely. The code should be changed once a reason is gathered this should not exceed 5 school days. If no reason is given for the absence with 5 days, then the school should change the N code to the O code. When the code is changed the school should record who is making the change, as well as when and why (this applies to any changes to codes).

### **Support/Challenges**

- Has a first day phone call been made
- Does school send out a letter asking for reason (this can be taken off Sims)
- Do parents know the process for informing school of their child's absence
- If a child has not been seen for 5 consecutive days, then a home visit must be carried out. The school should record what they observed at the home visit, including if they were unable to see the child or no one appeared to be home.

## **O – Unauthorised Absence**

Any unauthorised absence needs to be addressed quickly following school's attendance processes, so that any issues can be resolved quickly with support put in to place.

### **Support/Challenges**

- Schools to promote good attendance through parent evenings, assemblies, displays, attendance promotions, other platforms such as school websites, class Dojo, merits, texts, letters, and incentives.
- Follow school attendance processes – telephone calls, letters, home visits etc
- Ensure you follow the Attendance Response
- Are there siblings in other schools with the same attendance pattern/absences?
- Are other unauthorised absence codes on the registration certificate such as the U, G, N, or a combination of concerning codes that need to be taken into consideration.
- Are there any patterns with the absences?
- Are parents struggling to contact school due to financial issues, language barrier, is there another system that can be put into place for them
- School to have a meeting with the parents/ carers (and pupils where appropriate) to ascertain the reason for the absences and establish if further support needs to be put in place. This could include referrals to other agencies for support with routines and boundaries, sleep, behaviour, unmet needs etc.
- Schools to be observant of trends & patterns of absences within key cohort groups that may be having an impact on whole school attendance. - consider consulting with your linked A&IO for further support and advice in considering next steps
- Has a GP protocol been considered with an A&I Officer?
- Has a school attendance planning meeting taken place? Would there be benefit inviting the Local Authority to this meeting?

School to consider completing a self- Assessment of Attendance Registers, and request a full Attendance Audit through your linked A&I.

## **Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause**

### **Q – Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements**

The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so.

### **Y1 – Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available**

The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.

### **Y2 – Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel**

The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.

### **Y3 – Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed**

Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.

### **Y4 – Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed**

Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.

### **Y5 – Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention**

The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:

- in police detention,
- remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or
- detained under a sentence of detention.

### **Y6 – Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law**

The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:

- contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or
- prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.

### **Y7 – Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause**

An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.

## Support/Challenges

- Where there is an outbreak of infectious diseases, you must get advice from Public Health England on next steps, such as a deep clean, closing a year group, or whole school. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/notifications-of-infectious-diseases-noids>
- You must notify the local authority of all situations that result in full or partial closure of the school
- 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).
- Can be used for pupils who are Abroad and returning to the UK would be contrary to International, national, or regional travel restrictions

## Administrative codes

### Z – Pupil not on roll

Used to set up registers before pupils are due to join. To safeguard children, schools must put all pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend. Please do not ignore any pupils who do not attend on their first day.

### Support/Challenges

- If the pupil does not arrive to school as expected on the first day, contact parents/carers to find out the reason why
- Arrange a meeting for the parent and child to attend
- Complete a home visit to see if the family are still at the address and ascertain the reasons why they are not attending
- If not at the address contact CME, C code absences until instructed by CME to deregister a child. You must not de register until CME have given authorisation to do so.
- Contact your Local Authority attendance officer to check if the child is still due to attend your school or has started attending another school.

### # - School closed to pupils

To be used for whole or part school planned closures e.g., between terms/half terms/weekends, along with bank holidays.

### Support/Challenges

- It can also be used up to five times in academic year for curriculum planning/ training and when the school is used for polling stations.
- Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term/ start dates for different year groups. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year

## Children Missing from Education

- All children without a school roll, who are not 'Educated other than at School' (EHE) should be known to CME and a school place will be allocated. If you are aware of a child who is not on school roll, please notify the team immediately.  
CME can be contacted through: [ed-missingchildren@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:ed-missingchildren@sheffield.gov.uk)

- When a school place is allocated, support offered, and a parent/carer fails to take their child to the named school a School Attendance Order can be applied for from the Local Authority Attendance Team which will allow for the allocation of a school place via court order.
- CME will work with complex families who are new to city to ensure they are able to access full time education.
- Any School 'off-rolling' a child must submit a de-registration form to the Local Authority CME department and must wait for this to be accepted and a leave date given before any child is removed from roll.

Further information:

- Children Missing Education: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education)
- Fair access: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fair-access-protocols-in-school-admissions)
- Form - Request to Remove Child from School Roll (see supporting documents): [www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/attendance-guidance-schools](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/attendance-guidance-schools)

### **Children Transferring Schools**

When children are transferring from one Sheffield school to another the family must request a transfer form from their current school. This needs to be completed and return to the Local Authority admissions team. In the meantime, the child must continue to attend the school they are on roll at until a start date for a new school has been agreed, and the child starts to attend.

### **School Standard Letters**

The Local Authority standard letters for school attendance are shown on the next page. These should be copied onto your school's own letter head.

Letters can be sent out to parents as part of your schools' progression of concerns.

Letter CLSA4 must not be sent to parents before permission has been given by the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Social Worker. A date range for the 15-day period will also be provided by the AISW.

Letter CLSA5 is only to be sent following a discussion with AISW

### **Sources of Further Information**

Further information, including legal guidance, guidance on the marking of attendance registers and strategies for improved school attendance can be found in the following documentation.

#### **DFE School Attendance: guidance for schools including coding**

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

#### **DFE Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities**

[Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

#### **DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance**

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

## **DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education**

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

## **DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs**

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school)

## **Elective Home Education**

[Elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/elective-home-education)

[“Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – guidance 2022”](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/suspension-and-permanent-exclusion-from-maintained-schools-academies-and-pupil-referral-units-in-england-including-pupil-movement-guidance-2022)

[School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions)

## **Sheffield City Council Child Performance and Licensing**

[Children in entertainment licences \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/children-and-families/child-performance-and-licensing)

## **Sheffield City Council Exceptional Leave in Term Time Policy –**



term time leave  
policy August 24.docx

## **School Attendance Orders**



SAO process diagram  
- v2 March2023.pdf

## **Education Supervision Orders**



Education  
Supervision Order prc

## **Full and Effective Use of Legal Powers**



Full and Effective Use  
of Legal Powers.docx















## **Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct –**



Sheffield Penalty  
Notice Code of Condu

## **Key Contact**

For Attendance related enquires please email  
[Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Sheffieldinclusion&attendance@sheffield.gov.uk)

Code	Letter	Signed by
SACL0	 1.0 Nursery Attendance Initial Con	School staff
SACL1	 SACL1.docx	School staff
SACL2	 SACL2 - Concern Letter 2 - 09.08.22.doc	School staff
SACL3	 SACL3 - Invite to Meeting - 09.08.22.doc	School staff
SACL4	 notice to improve.docx	Head teacher
SACL5	 SACL5 - Continue to Monitor 09.08.22.doc	School staff
SACL6	 SACL6 - Punctuality - 09.08.22.doc	School staff
SACL7	 SACL7.doc	School staff
SACL8	 SACL8 - PN explanation - 09.08.22	School staff
SACL9	 SAP meeting.docx	School staff
SACL10	 2.0 ICM Form Oct 20.docx	School staff
	 HT Cert (print on Blue) Example Templa	Template
	 attendance summary template schools.docx	Template
	 S9 witness statement template.doc	Template

