

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2025-2026

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1. Introductory statement

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils and to enable them to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Leigh Academy Molehill's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The Academy will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the Policy.

At Leigh Academy Molehill we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all our pupils. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school. All children have the right to an education.

Parents and carers have a vital role, as well as a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and punctuality. As an Academy, developing effective links with parents is a high priority and we are committed to regularly conveying to parents, carers and pupils the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality. It is an offence in law to permit absence without good reason and may result in prosecution under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Leigh Academy Molehill adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the [DfE publication, 'Working together to improve school attendance' August 2024](#). The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Principal Mrs Laura Smith.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these.
- Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, including registration during every lesson of the day.
- Stress to parents and carers the importance of contacting the Academy on each day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to make contact with the Academy.
- Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes.
- Promote race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.
- Through consultation days and reporting systems, ensure that parents, carers and pupils are made aware of the attendance pattern and provide an opportunity to discuss how it may affect

learning and offer supportive strategies to improve attendance.

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- Support pupils who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the Academy support, Local Authority, Early Help, Schools Liaison Officer/Attendance service.
- Actively promote, encourage and celebrate 100% attendance.

2.2 Parents / Carers will:

- Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
- Contact the school whenever the pupil is absent on the first day and on each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment if requested to do so by the Academy.
- Avoid removing their child during the Academy day.
- Attend attendance meetings with members of staff from the Academy when requested in order to put in place strategies to improve attendance.

3. Attendance Procedures

3.1 Registration

- The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of each session (am / pm) is known as Roll Call. This is undertaken within the first 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions. Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken 'electronically' by register calling.
- Designated staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call at the appropriate time, and use the correct registration codes (Appendix 1).
- Registers for Roll Call will officially close 30 minutes after the start of the am and pm sessions.

The academy day starts at 8.40am. Pupils who arrive after 8.40am will be recorded as late to school (L code). Pupils who arrive late after 9.10 am will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. Afternoon registration will take place at 13:00 pm. Any mark after this time will be marked accordingly.

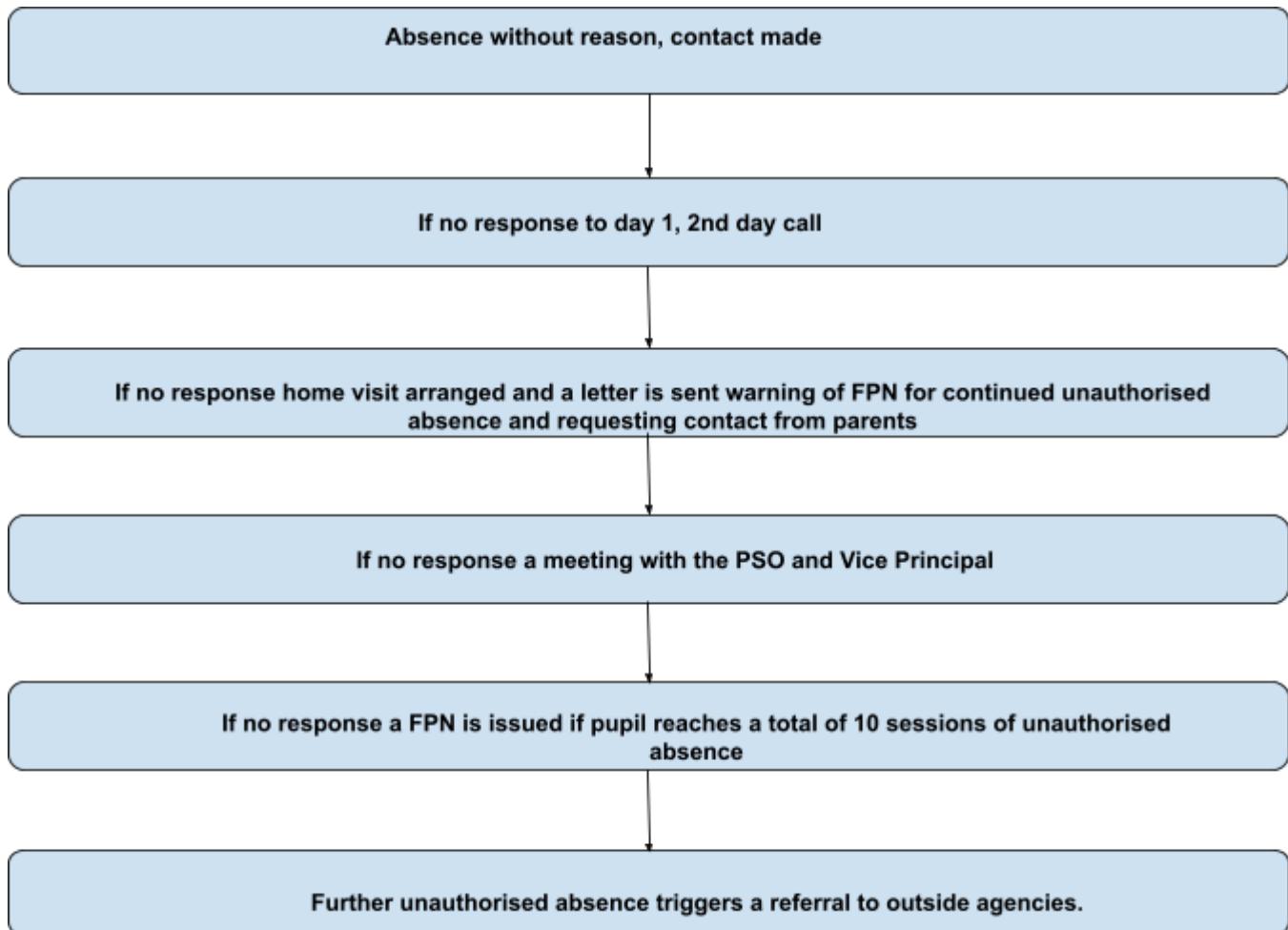
3.2 Informing the Academy of Absence

If a child is absent Parents or Carers must:

- Contact the school phone line on 01622 751729 prior to 8.15am on the first day of absence, advising of the reason and likely length of absence. Parents or carers should continue to inform the Academy on each subsequent day of absence.
- Medical evidence must be provided for attendance to be authorised if your child's attendance is below 90%. The Academy will not chase up medical evidence as this is a parental responsibility to provide. Wherever possible, all medical appointments should be taken outside of school time. Medical evidence can be an attached photo, or photocopy, of:
 - letter from medical professional,
 - appointment card with name date and time,
 - copy of prescription note,
 - copy of prescribed medication sticker on side of medicine packaging

- Request a discussion/meeting with the Pastoral Support Officer to discuss extended absence due to illness or if there are any other concerns affecting school attendance.

If the Academy is not informed of an absence, it will take the following action:



3.3 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absences lead to a referral to the Local Authority and / or a prosecution or instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Absence will be deemed unauthorised where:

- Parents or carers do not provide medical evidence to support absence due to ill health
- Parents or carers remove pupils from school for holidays or trips (leave of absence) during term time
- Pupils arrive at the Academy after the registration period has ended unless there are agreed arrangements in place
- Parents or carers keep children from the Academy unnecessarily
- Parents or carers do not communicate the reason for absence to the Academy
- A pupil truants- where they are absent without the parents' or carers' knowledge

Holidays in Term time will never be authorised. The Academy is closed for 14 weeks a year when parents can take holidays and travel abroad. Where there is an exceptional and immediate circumstance where a pupil will

need to be absent during term time, a request can be made to the Principal in writing or via email who will then consider the application and respond in writing. The Principal's decision is final.

3.4 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Pupils arriving late cannot start the day effectively, disrupt lessons, and encourage absence or poor punctuality in others. Where pupils are late to the Academy with no valid reason the following punctuality protocols will be followed:

- The Academy day starts at 8.40am and we expect pupils to be through the gate and on their way to their morning registration
- Any pupil who arrives through the gate after 8.40am will be recorded as late to school (L code) and expected to report to the office.
- The registers close at 9.10am and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). Afternoon registers close 10 minutes after the end of lunch respectively, after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).
- Persistent lateness can lead to a meeting with the Pastoral Support Officer and Vice Principal and where necessary a court referral being processed.
- Poor punctuality is classed as irregular Academy attendance and is dealt with accordingly. This may mean that parents or carers could face the possibility of legal action.
- If you know your child is going to be late for a specific reason please call the Academy before 8:30, following the same procedures for absence.

Illness during the school day

If a child becomes ill in school the following procedures will be followed:

If a child informs a member of staff that they feel unwell the member of staff will monitor the child and rule out any common reasons by ensuring that they have been to the toilet, that they are hydrated and that they are warm/cool enough. The member of staff will check that there is nothing worrying the child. Staff will also check that there is no known condition on medical lists for this child.

Following initial checks, the member of staff will then decide whether symptoms may require a call home. If this is the case they will contact the office and a call will be made home. If symptoms suggest that they do not require a call home then the teacher will continue to monitor in class or request that they are monitored (as they feel sick) by admin in the first aid area. The child will be monitored and should the symptoms worsen a call home will be made. If in any doubt a call will be made to parents to discuss the pupil, sometimes parents will be asked to attend the school to administer pain relief or cough mixture. If the child improves and or feels better they will return to class.

If a child has sickness or diarrhoea in school they will be sent home immediately. The child will be made comfortable while they wait to be collected. If contact cannot be made with parents then staff will contact the emergency contacts provided by the parents on the admissions form. If parents/ emergency contacts cannot be reached the child will be made comfortable and monitored and staff will continue to try to make contact. If necessary a first aider will be consulted for advice on an illness.

In the case of an emergency when the child's health is at risk an ambulance will be called and a member of staff will accompany the child to hospital. Parents/ authorised adults will be contacted. As soon as possible a senior member of staff will be informed.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of attendance takes place on a daily basis. It is systematic and rigorous to ensure there is a strategic approach to improving a pupil's attendance where it is below expected and impacting on their progress:

- Academy attendance data will be published for consideration at every Academy board meeting. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee as required.
- Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the Senior Leadership Team to enable interventions to occur.
- A Designated Principal/Senior Leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole Academy.
- Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per academic year.

5. Strategies for Improving Attendance and Punctuality

- The person responsible for leading attendance will meet regularly with relevant staff and make them aware of significant attendance trends and patterns and seek their support to address any issues with pupils, parents / carers and other stakeholders.
- Attendance, punctuality and its impact on learning and progress will be a key area for discussion between teachers, leaders and parents / carers during consultation days.
- A range of positive strategies will be used to reward individual pupils and groups for outstanding and/or improved attendance.
- Regular attendance meetings will be held
- Pupil attendance data may be shared with Parents/Carers, Local Authority, Early Help, School Liaison Officer/Attendance Service , Children's Social Services, Police, relevant LEA's, Ofsted and the DfE.

6. Absence of Leave during Term Time

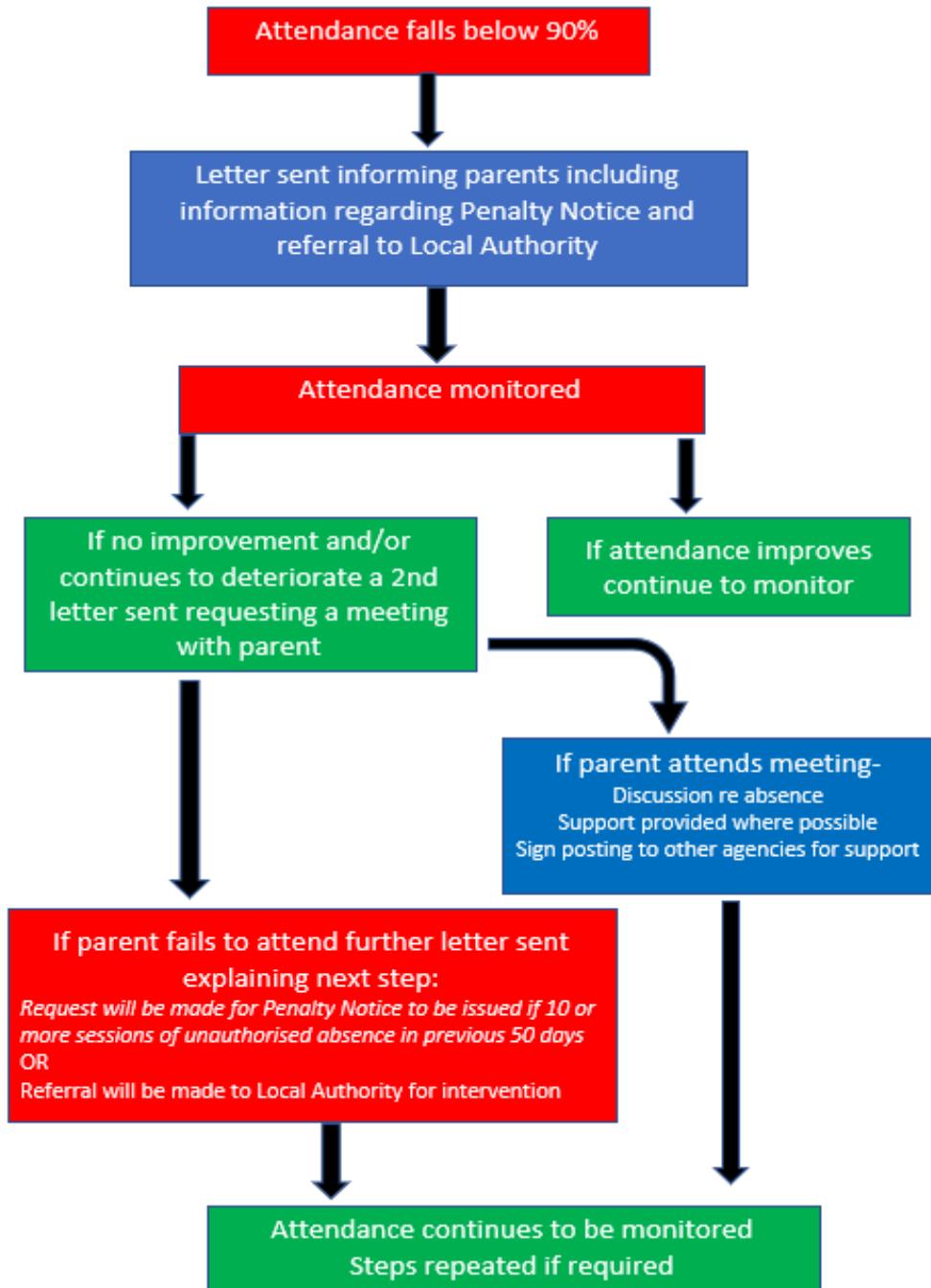
The Academy may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy. The Principal of the Academy will make the final decision of acceptance or refusal. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. If absence is not authorised and a leave of absence is taken. Ten unauthorised sessions of absence (including Holiday (G) / Unauthorised Absence (O) / Unauthorised Late (U)) may result in a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28-day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

7. Persistent Absence Referrals

A pupil is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. The Academy will consider pupils below 95% at risk. Pupils who fall into either of these categories will be monitored by the Academy

Analysis of attendance by micro population will identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance. Use of external data including Data dashboard will be analysed and further information on groups made available. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after Academy and Trust Interventions.

The following flow chart outlines the procedure taken by the Academy if attendance falls below 90%.



8. Penalty Notices

Regular and punctual attendance at school/alternative provision is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. [Section 444A of the Education Act 1996](#) empowers designated local authority officers, Principals (and Vice Principals and assistant Principals authorised by them) and the police to issue penalty notices.

A Penalty Notice may be requested for:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty notices have changed from August 2024 in line with the [new DFE guidance](#).

Ten unauthorised sessions of absence (including Holiday (G) / Unauthorised Absence (O) / Unauthorised Late (U)) may result in a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the charge will be at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. A statutory attendance referral may be made to the local authority and may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

Exclusion:

A penalty notice can only be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

Education for Health Needs including Mental Health

The Academy will operate according to its statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school). The Academy will refer to the Local Authority regarding alternative provision where a student cannot attend school full-time for 15 days or more, consecutive or otherwise, due to a physical or mental health need and cannot access full-time education.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a school may only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its role in specific circumstances, which include where: - the pupil has been certified by a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and - Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

9. Removing a Pupil from the Academy Roll

School Transfer

If parents/carers decide to transfer their child to another school or Academy, they should advise the school office as a matter of priority, providing all necessary details, including any new address (if relevant) and the school or Academy the child is transferring to. When in the process of a school or Academy transfer the child must continue to attend Leigh Academy Molehill until a start date has been agreed with the new school or Academy. If the Academy does not receive this information and a child stops attending, he or she becomes a 'Child Missing Education' (CME). Any child in this category is reported to the Child Missing Education Officer at the Local Authority, who will follow up the matter under safeguarding legislation

As per The School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024 - Section 9, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from the academy roll due to continued serious absence. .

- The pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from the roll.
- The pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll.
- <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/regulation/9/made>

Elective Home Education (EHE)

If parents or carers take the decision to educate a child at home, they must tell the Academy of this in writing – this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. Once this letter is received, the Academy will remove the pupil from the Academy roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the pupil remains on the Academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-Academy attendance procedures and could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti – Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Addendum regarding admission and attendance at the Academy

- We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.
- Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.
- We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.
- Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the admission policy.

Appendix 1 CODE DESCRIPTION

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/\	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	

Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	

G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)