



H O R N C H U R C H

H I G H S C H O O L

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Attendance and punctuality policy

SCHOOL NAME:	HORNCHURCH HIGH SCHOOL
DATE OF ADOPTION:	01/11/25
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	ANNUALLY
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CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SIGNATURE:	L.HALL
HEAD SIGNATURE:	S. MADHVANI

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Policy has been agreed by the Governors, Staff and Students of Hornchurch High School and follows the DfE guidance (August 2024). It represents our commitment to striving for the highest possible levels of attendance, and our expectation that as a successful school we should have overall attendance levels above the national average, and persistent absence rates below the national average. It sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance are also detailed, as well as rewards for, and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

Hornchurch High School is committed to ensuring that all of its students have the best possible chance of achieving their academic and personal potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

The evidence is clear, students who attend school regularly, attend school punctually and attend school prepared for the day are more likely to achieve than those who don't. We understand that there can be barriers to excellent attendance, and it is our duty to work in partnership with families and other agencies to overcome them. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and every pupil should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, striving for excellence.

We will endeavour to ensure that all our students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. Poor attendance can be an early indicator for safeguarding concerns and as a school, our primary goal is to ensure that students are safe, healthy and successful. We believe that early identification and intervention is crucial to our young people's success.

To meet these objectives Hornchurch High School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.



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3.0 AIM

The aim of the policy is to improve overall attendance rates and punctuality rates for pupils to ensure that all pupils receive the highest quality education and that through this they are able to develop effectively as young adults. It is our job to:

- ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development;
- discharge the school's duty to safeguard its students to be best of its ability;
- ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence;
- improve the life chances of Havering's young people and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Parents/Carers

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to:

- ensure their child has access to a full-time education while they are of compulsory school age;
- ensure that their child attends school every day, unless there is a valid reason not to e.g. illness, work experience;
- ensure that their child arrives to school on time;
- contact the school attendance office on the first day of absence, stating the reason;
- make medical appointments outside of school time;
- ensure that no request for holiday leave during term time is made;
- seek help from the school if requiring assistance in improving their child's attendance or punctuality;
- keep any attendance contracts that are made with the school and/or local authority;
- support the school and the Local Authority Officer in strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality levels of their child, including attending meetings and engaging with outside agencies.

Failure to comply with these responsibilities could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued or legal proceedings being brought by the Local Authority.

4.2 Pupils

It is the responsibility of pupils to:

- ensure that they attend school regularly and on time unless there is a valid reason not to;
- inform their form tutor and bring in note from home to explain any absences;
- inform their classroom teachers if an absence is known in advance and to make sure they ask for work to complete;
- catch up on missed work on return;
- see the school's attendance officer to receive their mark before going to their lesson if they are late.



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4.3 The Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- set challenging targets to meet or exceed national averages;
- provide sufficient time for Attendance Officers to supervise attendance management and to be involved with poor attendees and their families;
- provide sufficient time for the Attendance Officers to analyse data, liaise with teachers and external agencies;
- take an interest in attendance and punctuality and support intervention with the poorest attendance;
- report attendance statistics to the governors as part of a termly report;
- approve the issuing of fixed penalty notices where necessary;
- communicate the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

4.4 The Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to:

- set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents;
- ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- be familiar with current legislation on attendance and the school attendance policy;
- request the Headteacher to report on attendance at each governing body meeting.

4.5 The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance:

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leaders responsible for attendance to:

- lead, change and improve attendance across the school;
- evaluate and monitor expectations and processes;
- have a strong grasp of attendance and absence data;
- promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through assemblies and rewards;
- ensure that tutors are following school's procedures in dealing with absences and punctuality;
- meet the Attendance Officer and EWO to discuss specific pupils and intervention strategies to be used and to provide feedback of intervention in the past week;
- analyse attendance data for the year group, and co-ordinate the responses and interventions with form tutors and Attendance Officer;
- ensure personal connections are made with parents/carers and students who have regular unauthorised absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.



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4.6 Attendance and Educational Welfare Officers

It is the responsibility of the Attendance and Education Welfare Officers to:

- ensure the administrative system is effective, organised and accurate;
- follow the school's procedures for first day calling;
- check and file all absence notes that are received, and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- seek explanations from parents/carers for absence;
- issue attendance letters where and when required;
- hold regular discussions with pastoral and senior team on attendance;
- inform the Heads of Year if a Form tutor is failing to maintain their registers correctly;
- assist the AHT, DHT and Headteacher in collating data for reports;
- pass messages from parents/carers to appropriate staff;
- conduct home visits to students who are absent;
- request parental meetings to take part at school;
- attend parental meetings to discuss the attendance of students at Hornchurch High;
- report any concerns to Safeguarding team;
- record and keep a record of students who are late.

4.7 Form Tutors

It is the responsibility of form tutors to:

- ensure accurate electronic registration takes place between 8.30am-9.00am.
- ensure that registers are completed and the correct code is used; never leave blank spaces.
- complete a paper register if it is not possible to complete electronic register;
- look carefully at attendance data for their tutor group, spot patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals;
- use attendance and punctuality as part of learning conversations with pupils and parents/carers;
- promote the ethos of the attendance and punctuality policy through registration periods, make 100% the expectation;
- provide a positive welcome to students with poor attendance and support the student in catching up with missed work.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Registration

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day at 8.30 a.m. and once during the afternoon session at 12.30pm. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. (DfE guidance suggests a maximum of 30 minutes). Students arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close), which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. Students arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (Late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence.



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The morning registration period will start at 08.30 and end at 09.00. The afternoon registration will start at 12.30 and end at 13.00.

Only the Headteacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise an absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absence). Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action. If a student is persistently late then a member of the Pastoral Team will arrange to meet with the family as soon as the pattern is identified.

5.2 First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. If the school does not receive notification it will telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. First day contact will be carried out as early as possible in the school day, in order to notify parents whose children may have set off for school, but not arrived, as quickly as possible.

Any absence from school due to illness, appointments or any other reason **MUST** be reported to the Attendance Office by 8:30am at the latest by one of the following methods:

1. Call the school on 01708 691441, option 2. Calls are always answered within 3 rings unless busy in which case it reverts to voicemail where you **MUST** leave a message with child's name, form and reason for absence.
2. Email: attendance@hornchurchhigh.com stating your child's full name, form and reason for absence. We do still want to speak to you so please expect a follow up call

Please do not contact us via Parentmail+ as this service is no longer monitored.

Where the absence is longer than 2 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. A home visit may also take place when we are concerned about a student's welfare and the reason for their absence. We will not ask for medical evidence or conduct home visits unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Appointments

Parents must call and speak to the attendance team, using the school number on 01708 691441, option 2: **BEFORE** the appointment date. This will be entered into the calendar and will avoid unnecessary absence calls from school. If the appointment is an emergency, we would expect evidence to be provided when the student returns to school. We would expect students to attend school either before or after an appointment.



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5.4 Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time will not be authorised. Any holidays taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice. Should the student fail to return without any other contact to the school, following notification to the Admissions and Attendance Service they may be taken off roll after ten school days. Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 Sect. 8 (f) (and amended 2013)

5.5 Leave of absence during term time

Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted. It should be remembered that ALL such applications are at the discretion of school – this is not an automatic right for parents. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice. Should the student fail to return without any other contact to the school, following notification to the Admissions and Attendance Service they may be taken off roll after ten school days. Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 Sect. 8 (f) (and amended 2013).

6.0 FOLLOWING UP ON UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

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

- call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or even call the police if we are concerned about the pupil's whereabouts;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained;
- call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer;
- if appropriate, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer;
- if appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance;
- identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals;
- where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention.

7.0 PERSISTANT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. In order to avoid students becoming persistent absentees and to



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improve attendance to school, our attendance escalation procedures will be triggered for any students with attendance below 97%.

8.0 PUNCTUALITY

Hornchurch High School, The Governing Body, OFSTED and DFE place great store on pupils being punctual to school and to lessons. Lack of punctuality affects learning and behaviour not only of the pupil who is late, but it has an impact on all other learners as the teacher is required to recap on missing learning for those who arrive late. This reduces learning time for the rest of the class.

Punctuality is also a key workplace skill which must be learnt at school and adhered to. Employees who are regularly late to work lose their jobs. In the work place you cannot arrive at the start time, you must be in the work place prior to the start time and ready at your desk or work station for the official start time. This principle holds true in school.

At Hornchurch High, our expectation is that pupils are in their classroom at 8.30. Pupils who arrive late will be placed in detention. The school gate closes at 8:28 to ensure all pupils can get to their classroom on time. Pupils who are regularly late could face further consequences and interventions.

Please support us in ensuring your child arrives on time, in correct uniform and with correct equipment, ready to work hard.

9.0 SANCTIONS

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

9.1 Parent meetings and contracts

You may be asked to participate in a Parenting Contract to support your child's attendance. These are initiated where school feels you may need help in influencing your child to attend properly. They have no force in law and are entered into voluntarily. A meeting will be held to which you and your child will be invited. The problems will be discussed and agreement reached as to what the school will do, the child will do and what you as parents/carers will do to try to improve the situation.

You may be offered some form of support such as counselling or parenting classes to assist you in setting boundaries and enforcing expectations of your child.

9.2 Penalty notices

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

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

9.3 Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences;
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996;
- Details of the support provided so far;
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis



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- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

10.0 PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Hornchurch High School are committed to ensuring that all students reach their full potential and achieve the best possible outcomes. The school uses all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality: ATTENDANCE IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS.

- The school monitors attendance weekly, and form tutors celebrate good attendance with pupils;
- There are weekly prizes and rewards in assembly to the form with the best attendance;
- Half termly rewards are given to students with good attendance;
- Students with attendance below the expected figure are mentored by their form tutor and Head of Year;
- Parents are encouraged to have an active role in promoting good attendance;
- We employ an Educational Welfare Officer to support good attendance;
- We work closely with the Local Authority to support good attendance;
- Competitions throughout the school year encouraging good attendance with prizes and rewards shared to those who are successful.

11.0 ATTENDANCE MONITORING

11.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

11.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns



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11.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

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

11.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence



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- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

I2.0 MESSAGE FOR PARENTS

This is a successful school, and you and your child play a part in making it so. We aim to encourage all members of the school community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and your child should be at school in good time for the start of the school day, every day the school is open, unless they are genuinely ill or there is some other unavoidable reason.

Some children are reluctant to go to school and say they do not feel well. It is for you as the parent/carer to judge whether they are genuinely unwell, or just unwilling. It will be better for them in the long run to go to school, rather than avoid it, as days off mean they will fall further behind and make them even more reluctant. Your job as the parent is to encourage them to attend.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is YOUR legal responsibility and permitting absence without good reason is an offence in law and may result in legal action being taken, or a Penalty Notice being issued.



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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
CI	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
JI	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination



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X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law



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Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays