East Sussex County Council

Guidance on school attendance

Updated: September 2017
Due for review: August 2018

For further information on attendance, please contact:
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Local Offer: eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/specialneeds/
What is included in this guidance?

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Introduction

Good school attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and if children are not in school, they are at greater risk of being exposed to, and taking part in, unsafe and risky behaviours.

The government expects

- Schools and local authorities to:
  - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
  - act early to address patterns of absence (Appendix 3 gives guidance on how schools should monitor and track attendance)
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, 2016, page 4

This guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

The Admission and Attendance Registers

The law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.

Contents of Admission Register

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

Expected First Day of Attendance

- Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year.
If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. A school cannot remove a pupil from the admissions register (off-roll) just because they do not attend on the expected first day, or subsequently, without following the Removal from Admissions Register (off-rolling) guidance as shown in Appendix 2.

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil’s name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school’s youngest year – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7 - unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided.

Deletions from the Admission Register (off-rolling)

- A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended.
- Appendix 2 shows what a school’s responsibility is around removing a pupil from the Admissions Register (off-rolling).

Children at Risk of Missing Education

- Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.
- All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil’s name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil’s name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil’s name is removed after they have completed the school’s final year.
- Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil’s name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:
  - the full name of the pupil;
  - the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
  - at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
• the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
• the name of pupil’s other or future school and the pupil’s start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
• the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil’s name is to be deleted from the admission register.

• All schools (including academies) must agree with the relevant local authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school’s permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Home Educated Children

• On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil’s local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

• Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority’s agreement to educate their child at home.
Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parent notifies school (must be in writing)

Speak with parent to verify communication is genuine

Are there any safeguarding concerns?

Contact SPOA or Social Worker if currently in place

Off Roll and pass written intention to TLP

SPOA = Single Point of Advice – Tel no. 01323 464222
TLP = Teaching and Learning Provision - tlp@eastsussex.gov.uk
Contents of Attendance Register

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (in the morning) and once during the second session (in the afternoon). On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:
• Present;
• Attending an approved educational activity;
• Absent; or,
• Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:
• Ascertain the reason;
• Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
• Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
• Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school’s electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Absence and Attendance Codes

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Authorised absence</th>
<th>Unauthorised absence</th>
<th>Administrative codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ - present AM</td>
<td>C- other authorised absence</td>
<td>G – unauthorised holiday</td>
<td>X – not required to attend due to non-compulsory school age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\ - present PM</td>
<td>E- exclusion</td>
<td>N – reason unknown</td>
<td>Y – unable to attend, exceptional circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L – late during registration</td>
<td>H – authorised holiday</td>
<td>O – unauthorised reason</td>
<td>Z – not on roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B – off site activity</td>
<td>I – illness</td>
<td>U – late after registration closed</td>
<td># - planned closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D – dual registration</td>
<td>M – medical appointment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P – sporting activity</td>
<td>R – religious observance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J – interview</td>
<td>S – study leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>V – educational visit</td>
<td>T – traveller absence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W – work experience</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 1 gives greater detail on each code.
Safeguarding and attendance

School attendance and punctuality is often a key indicator in identifying where a child or young person is at risk. Schools play a vital role in ensuring that a child or young person is not at risk of harm, including radicalisation, abuse and child sexual exploitation.

It is particularly important that early action is taken around attendance for those children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, such as those on a Child Protection Plan, Looked After Children, children who are known to be at risk of sexual exploitation and those where there are any other safeguarding concerns. This action would be taken on a daily basis, but schools must also have systems that look for concerning patterns of attendance over a period of time.

Appendix 3 gives guidance on how schools should monitor patterns of attendance.

Appendix 4 gives guidance on daily absence procedures to ensure the immediate safety of children and young people, including when to contact other agencies, such as social care and the police.
Appendix 1

Present at School

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

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm
Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed
Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. East Sussex Guidance is that the register should be closed 30 minutes after the start of the school day. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

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

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

Code B: Off-site educational activity
This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.
The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

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

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

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

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

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

**Authorised Absence from School**

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

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

**Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**
Only *exceptional circumstances* warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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

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

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

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

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors’ notes.

**Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

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

**Code R: Religious observance**

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

**Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise. It should be noted that all pupils are expected to attend every day until the last Friday in June and schools should offer meaningful learning experiences until this date. If a pupil does not attend, then they should be marked as absent and the usual procedures followed. The safeguarding of all pupils in year 11 is the responsibility of the school until the last Friday in June.

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

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.
This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

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

**Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.**
If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

DFE and East Sussex County Council guidance is that holidays should not be authorised by Headteachers, unless there are exceptional circumstances

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**
Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Guidance is given on this in Appendix 4. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil’s absence. When the reason for the pupil’s absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil’s attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**
If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**
Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.
Administrative Codes

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

Code X: Not required to be in school
This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
• The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
• The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil’s home is not within walking distance; or
• A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
• The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

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

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register
This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure
This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.
Appendix 2 – Removal from Admissions Register (off-rolling) guidance

CHANGE OF LOCAL SCHOOL

Parent notifies of the intent to change schools in writing

Ask the parent if a school application been completed

Yes

Check with admissions. Has a new school been allocated?

Yes

Liaise with new school to find out the start date

No

Young Person to continue to attend school, do not Off Roll

No

Wait for allocation, do not Off Roll

Complete Off Roll form only when new school confirm young person is on roll

For more information please see https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/student-management/attendance-behaviour/off-rolling-and-cme/off-rolling/

The Off Roll form can be found here https://sid.eastsussex.gov.uk/CMEOffRollingForm/

Please contact off-rolling@eastsussex.gov.uk with any further queries
MOVED OUT OF AREA

Parent notifies of the intent to move home in writing

Obtain new address details. Is the move within the UK?

\[ \begin{align*}
Y & \quad \text{Liaise with new school or LA admissions. Are details accurate?} \\
N & \quad \text{Obtain evidence of travel details from parent}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
Y & \quad \text{Complete Off Roll form} \\
N & \quad \text{CME referral by day 10 of continuous absence}
\end{align*} \]

Complete Off roll form at day 20, following liaison with ESCC CME Officer, as lost if the LA cannot locate family

For more information please see https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/student-management/attendance-behaviour/off-rolling-and-cme/off-rolling/

The Off Roll form can be found here https://sid.eastsussex.gov.uk/CMEOffRollingForm/

Please contact off-rolling@eastsussex.gov.uk with any further queries
Lost Children/absent no parental communication

Unknown reason for absence and no communication with parent

Within first 10 days try all contacts/friends & home visit

Contact established with parent?

✓

Depending on situation follow school’s attendance procedure

✗

Complete CME referral – DO NOT OFF ROLL

Day 10-20 LA investigates.

Day 20 of continuous absence. LA located child / family?

✓

Await confirmation from LA before completing Off Roll form

✗

If confirmed by the LA at day 20 as no trace, complete Off Roll form

For more information please see https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/student-management/attendance-behaviour/off-rolling-and-cme/off-rolling/

The Off Roll form can be found here https://sid.eastsussex.gov.uk/CMEOffRollingForm/

Please contact off-rolling@eastsussex.gov.uk with any further queries
No return from holiday

Attempt to make contact up to 5 days after expected return

Communication established with parent?

Y

Follow standard attendance management procedures

N

CME referral at day 5 for investigation to take place

Communication established with parent?

N

No communication then complete off roll form, following liaison with ESCC CME Officer, as expected return date + 10 school days

For more information please see https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/student-management/attendance-behaviour/off-rolling-and-cme/off-rolling/

The Off Roll form can be found here https://sid.eastsussex.gov.uk/CMEOffRollingForm/

Please contact off-rolling@eastsussex.gov.uk with any further queries
Appendix 3 – Guidance on how to monitor and track pupil attendance

The attendance of all pupils should be monitored and tracked at least fortnightly.

If there is a 3rd period of absence in the academic year:

- Attendance <96% for first time
- Attendance <96% repeated

Send a letter of concern including non-authorisation of absence.

Invite for attendance support meeting, including target setting.

Review attendance after 2 and then 4 weeks.

- Targets met and attendance improved
- If further absence and targets not met but attendance >90%

Send letter of congratulations.

- If further absence and targets not met, attendance <90% and at least 10 unauthorised sessions in last 6 weeks:
  - Referral to ESBAS
- Consider traded referral to ESBAS
  - OR
  - Use other EWO service

Attendance 100% for that period.

Publicise on attendance noticeboards.

Rewards for individuals.

No further action if no further absence.

If further absence:

Attendance <96% for first time:

- Send a letter of concern including non-authorisation of absence.

Attendance <96% repeated:

- Invite for attendance support meeting, including target setting.

Review attendance after 2 and then 4 weeks.

- Targets met and attendance improved
- If further absence and targets not met but attendance >90%

Send letter of congratulations.

- If further absence and targets not met, attendance <90% and at least 10 unauthorised sessions in last 6 weeks:
  - Referral to ESBAS
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  - OR
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Attendance 100% for that period.

Publicise on attendance noticeboards.

Rewards for individuals.

No further action if no further absence.

If further absence:

Attendance <96% for first time:

- Send a letter of concern including non-authorisation of absence.

Attendance <96% repeated:

- Invite for attendance support meeting, including target setting.

Review attendance after 2 and then 4 weeks.

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Send letter of congratulations.

- If further absence and targets not met, attendance <90% and at least 10 unauthorised sessions in last 6 weeks:
  - Referral to ESBAS
- Consider traded referral to ESBAS
  - OR
  - Use other EWO service

Attendance 100% for that period.

Publicise on attendance noticeboards.

Rewards for individuals.
Appendix 4 – Daily absence guidance.

Schools should have a ‘priority call list’ of students who are on a CP plan, LAC and those where there are safeguarding concerns. All pupils on list should have a safeguarding file.

Timely registers taken in class (within 5 minutes of the start of the school day)

Schools should have a ‘priority call list’ of students who are on a CP plan, LAC and those where there are safeguarding concerns. All pupils on list should have a safeguarding file.

Timely closing of registration (30 minutes after the start of school day at the latest)

Contact all pupils without a known reason for absence

A mend register

On day one of absence

Try all contact numbers
Contact schools of siblings
Ask friends
Check social media
Send letter/email asking for contact

Response

Amend register

If open to Social Care, contact Social Worker or Early Help Key Worker. If LAC, also contact the relevant Virtual School

Contact all pupils without a known reason for absence

Response

Amend register

Send letter requesting contact

On day two of absence

Try all contact numbers
Contact schools of siblings
Ask friends
Check social media
Door knock, leaving a letter requesting contact

Response

Amend register

If case meets level 3 or 4 on the ‘Continuum of Need’, contact SPOA with chronology

If this is the first time, consider adding pupil to the priority list

If this is NOT the first time, add pupil to the priority list

On day three of absence

Try all contact numbers
Contact schools of siblings
Ask friends
Check social media
Contact Police

Response

Amend register

Send letter requesting contact

If case meets level 3 or 4 on the ‘Continuum of Need’, contact SPOA with chronology

If this is the first time, consider adding pupil to the priority list

If this is NOT the first time, add pupil to the priority list
References

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, 2016