



ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Mark's CE Primary School



DATED 18th September 2025

Approved by Governors	Review Date	Review Date
September 2025	September 2026	



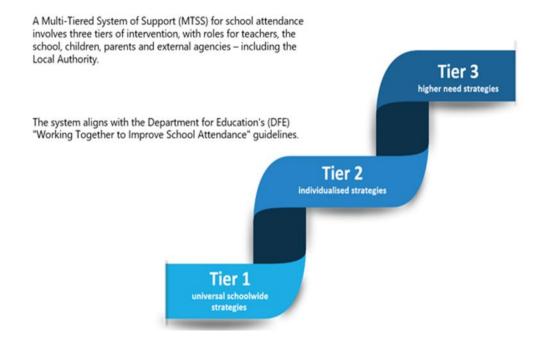
Name of the Senior Attendance Champion: Deborah Sadler

Introduction

St Mark's CE Primary School is proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance.

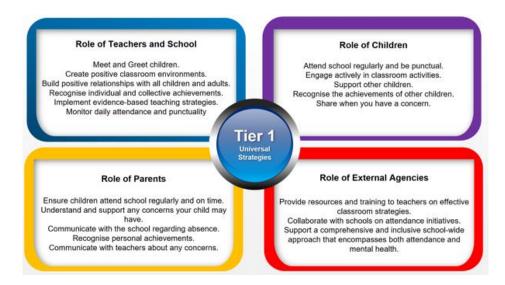
A Multi-Tiered System of Support

To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, we implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). This involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority. Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of this system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" statutory paper 2024.

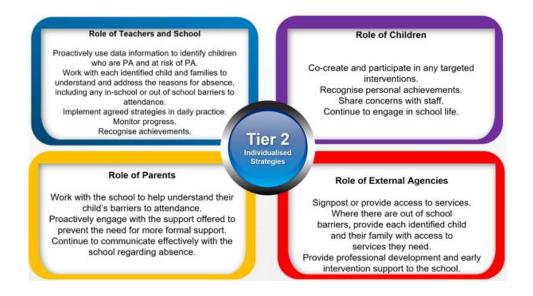




Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.

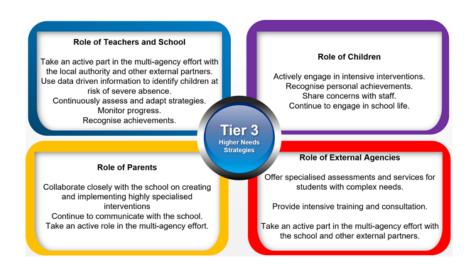


Tier 2 – Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.





Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



A Recognition-Based Approach

Our attendance philosophy recognises both personal and collective achievements.

- Weekly nominations from class teachers for improvements in attendance and/or punctuality
- Winners of the nominations receive a class reward the following week
- At the end of each half term, the class with the lowest number of days of unauthorised absence (during that half term) will receive a class reward
- At the end of the year, the class with the lowest number of days of unauthorised absence over the year will receive a reward
- Individual attendance awards will be given at the end of the year for children who have attended well in exceptional circumstances, or who have made improvements over time with attendance or punctuality
- Children receive an Attendance Dojo point each morning for being on time

The Importance of School Attendance

School attendance plays an important role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and prospects. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- Academic Achievement
- Social Development
- Building Routine
- Teacher-Pupil Interaction
- Preventing Knowledge Gaps
- School Engagement
- Legal and Parental Responsibility
- Community Well-being



There are many factors which can impact on a child attending school, if you have any concerns, you should contact the school as soon as possible.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

We expect that all children on our school roll (including those of non-compulsory school age) attend school every day, on time.

We also expect that if this is not possible, due to illness or exceptional circumstances, then parents/carers will communicate this with school at the earliest opportunity.

Contact Details of School Staff

Name of Staff Member	Roles and Responsibilities	Contact Details
Deborah Sadler	Attendance Champion	If you wish to contact any staff
Shabana Khan	Attendance Manager/ Home-	members that have a
	School Link Worker	responsibility for attendance,
Trudi Jarvis	DDSL and Early Help Lead	please contact the school office
Deborah Sadler	Safeguarding Leader (DSL)	via email or telephone.
Deborah Sadler	Head Teacher	office@stmarks.orchardct.org.uk
Julie Thompson	Governor for School Attendance.	01782 234411

Using Data to Improve Attendance

We use data to identify attendance concerns for:

- The whole school cohort and Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, LAC, and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils who have an allocated social worker or are known to social care.
- A pupil who is absent for prolonged periods, or repeated occasions, which may indicate a safeguarding concern, such as CSE or CRE, particularly county lines.
- Pupils at risk of PA.
- Pupils at risk of SA.

Strategy for Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

- At St Mark's, attendance is regularly monitored and data is analysed by Mrs Khan, the Education Welfare Officer, and the School Attendance Champion (and Headteacher), Mrs Sadler.
- All parents are informed half termly of their child's overall attendance and their attendance compared to the school average.
- Regular discussions will be held with teachers, Mrs Khan, the EWO and parents/carers if their child's attendance is identified as being a concern.
- Discussions will include patterns of attendance/ trends of absence and supporting families in increasing their child's attendance. A 'Family and Child Attendance Support Plan' will be put



into place to help to monitor, manage and support this. This may involve other agencies to provide support, guidance and education such as 0-19 team, Social Care/The Local Authority, Housing and Young Carers.

- We will keep appropriate and accurate records: registers are taken in the morning and the
 afternoon. From the registers, attendance data will be collated and shared with the head
 teacher, governing body and the DfE. This will help to inform the school, L.A. and DfE of trends
 in attendance and punctuality so we are able to effectively target attendance and punctuality
 in school.
- We will monitor patterns of attendance: Teachers, school leaders, Mrs Khan and the EWO will monitor children's attendance to support families where attendance is a concern.
- Meetings will be held by Mrs Khan and Mrs Sadler (School Attendance Champion and Headteacher) on a weekly basis to discuss the concerns around attendance, and the EWO will be involved where required. Data collated will support the school in targeting attendance improvements.

Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices

If, despite intervention and support, attendance continues to fall, then a Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued and may result in a referral to Education Welfare for statutory action.

Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-school week period.

These Absences can be late after register closes (U), Unauthorised Absences (O) and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences (G). They can also be a combination of any of the above.

Upon receipt of the referral to Education Welfare, the case will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer for statutory action. Attendance will be monitored weekly, as outlined in the policy, medical evidence and contact with the school will be scrutinised by the Education Welfare Officer. Home visits, telephone calls, meetings and letters will be actioned. If attendance continues to be unauthorised a penalty notice fine will be issued.

The parent/carer has 21 days to pay (£80 per parent, per child), if the fine is not paid after 21 days the fine will double to £160 per parent, per child unless not paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the matter will proceed to court.

The matter would move to an Aggravated Statutory Offence (L4441(a)) if parents/carers have previous convictions for non-school attendance.

Upon receipt of the referral to Education Welfare, the case will be allocated to an Education Welfare Officer for statutory action. Attendance will be monitored weekly, as outlined in the policy, medical evidence and contact with the school will be scrutinised by the Education Welfare Officer. Home visits, telephone calls, meetings and letters will be actioned. If there is no improvement in attendance, an attendance review meeting is held with the Education Welfare Officer, the EWO manager, a representative from school and parents/carers. The case will proceed to court; this then carries a heavier fine, possible custodial sentence and it results in a criminal conviction.



The information below explains the new statutory guidance for School Penalty Notices for Attendance. This process does not reset each year, it will escalate with each Penalty Notice issued.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice are issued to each parent, for <u>each</u> absent child.

For Example: 2 siblings absent for leave during term time would result in <u>each</u> parent receiving 2 separate Penalty Notices.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence

(Within 3 Years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Irregular Attendance or leave in Term Time the amount will be £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Third Offence

(Within 3 years)

The third time a Penalty Notice is issued for leave in Term Time or irregular attendance, the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court, where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be imposed.

Note: Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on Parents future DBS certificates as a 'Failure to safeguard a child's education'.

10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notices will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of Unauthorised absence in a 10school week period.

These Absences can be late after register closes, Unauthorised Absences and Unauthorised Term Time leave absences. They can also be a combination of any of the above.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority on the instruction from the School/Academy, in line with the Department for Education legislation. Once issued these cannot be withdrawn.

Removal from roll

- If a child is absent from school for 20 consecutive days following the start of the first day of absence, they will be taken off roll at the end of the 20th school day and so will lose their position at St Mark's CE Primary School and the parent/carer will need to reapply to St Mark's or apply to another educational establishment upon their return.
- Following the safeguarding procedures within school this will be reported to the local authority as set out in the Stoke-on-Trent Council Promoting Regular School Attendance – Children Missing Education (CME) guidance.

Elective Home Education and Removal from School Roll

- Upon the 20th day of absence, the child will be taken off roll from St Mark's CE Primary at the end of that school day, and a new application to either St Mark's CE Primary or another educational establishment will need to be completed by parents/ carers upon any return.
- Elective Home Education is the term used to describe a parents' decision to provide education at home rather than sending their child to school.
- Parents are required to provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs their child may have.
- If a child is on roll at a school the parents need to notify the school in writing. The school must then inform the local authority.



- If a child is subject to a School Attendance Order parents must seek to have the order revoked by the local authority before the child's name can be removed from the school roll.
- Parents' right to home educate applies equally where children have SEN.
- Where a child has a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan it remains the duty of the Local Authority to review the plan annually.

Day-to-Day Processes for Managing Attendance

As part of daily and weekly monitoring school will:

- Call on the first day of absence, if the absence has not been called in by parents/carers. If
 there is no contact made via telephone, a text message will sent to the first contact on the
 child's records. If there is no contact made then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.
- On the second day of absence, if there has been no contact with parents or carers, contact
 will be tried again with all contacts on the child's records, a text message to contact 1 and if
 there are any welfare concerns, Mrs Khan will complete a home visit to ascertain the reason
 for the child's absence. A calling card will be left at the home address, requesting contact be
 made with the school.
- On the third day of absence, there may be a home visit from the Education Welfare Officer and / or Mrs Khan. Again, a calling card will be left from either professional requesting contact. An email and text will sent to the registered email address and contact 1.
- By day 5 a CME (Child Missing in Education) a referral process will be started to the Local Authority. This will state the contact attempts made and the results of these contacts, attendance percentages as well as the last date the children were in school and any other details that may be relevant.
- We will continue to attempt contact via calls, texts, emails and home visits until the 20th day of absence.

The school has a duty to safeguard the welfare of all students. Any concerns about a child's attendance will be investigated promptly to ensure their well-being.

Unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, including home visits and communication with relevant agencies.

We follow *Keeping Children Safe In Education 2025* guidance to ensure safe practices.

Times of the School Day

- School breakfast club opens at 7:30am for parents who have requested a place for their child (If you require a place, please book on Arbor).
- School gates open at 8.30am at main site.
- School doors open at 8.30am for all pupils from Reception to Year 6.
- The school gate closes and learning starts at 8.40am.
- All pupils are expected to be in school by 8.40am when the gates close, after this time your child is classed as late on the register.
- At the Nursery Site, gates open at 8:50am and gates (and registration) closes at 9:00am.
- Parents/Carers are expected to accompany their child to the school office if they are late, where they will be asked to complete an entry on our Inventry system. This will register your



child with a late mark on the register. If your child is persistently late a meeting with parents will be held and support put into place where needed.

- Children will be marked late if they arrive after 8:40am. However, if your child arrives after 9.15am, they will be marked with a 'U' code which is an unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on their attendance and will be discussed with parents/carers through a meeting with Education Welfare Officer and/or Mrs Khan.
- School finishes at 3:10pm for all pupils in Reception to Year 6, with the Reception doors opening at 3:00pm. The end of the Nursery school day is 3:00pm.
- If your child is not collected by 3.20pm (or 3:10pm at Nursery site), the late collection policy applies.

Coding of Attendance

Attendance will be recorded using the DFE's statutory attendance codes, please refer to the appendix for coding.

Requesting Absence Leave

- Parents must request a leave of absence at least 4 weeks before the planned leave. A request form is available from the school office.
- A discussion will be had with either the EWO or Mrs Khan to discuss the reason and length of the absence. During the discussion parents will be informed of the possible outcomes and the process of referrals.
- The request will then be placed with the head teacher, who will follow the statutory guidance dated August 2024.
- Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request by letter and/or telephone.
- If there is no permission requested, a suspected leave of absence letter will be sent to the
 parents asking for a reason of the absence stating if there is no contact made an automatic
 referral to Education Welfare will be sent. If there is contact a decision will be made by the
 head teacher and the parent will be informed.
- Where possible, please arrange medical appointments out of school hours. When possible, we expect children to attend prior and after the appointment. Authorisation of these absences will only occur if medical evidence is provided to school. If a child does attend prior to or after the appointment the session will be authorised and a present with be recorded.
- Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Reporting a Child's Absence

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day when school is open and to notify the school by 9am, if their child is absent for any reason on the first morning of the absence and then every other day.

Ways to report the absence:

- By telephoning the school office 01782 234411 (option 1) or the Nursery office on 01782 237125.
- In person at the school office



- By sharing medical card/ letter/ text with the school office in advance
- By completing a leave of absence request form (available from the school office)

Please do not use any other method of reporting an absence or sending medical evidence. Emails and Class Dojo are not acceptable ways to communicate absences to school or Nursery.

Holiday Request

- Leave in term time is not authorised and will be marked as a 'G' code on the register.
- This will then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Definitions

In the context of school attendance and education in the UK, the terms "Persistent Absence," "Risk of Persistent Absence," and "Severe Absence" are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by students. These terms are important for tracking and addressing attendance issues.

Persistent Absence (PA):

Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of student absence from school that is considered to be a significant cause for concern.

Threshold: In England, a student is considered to be persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions.

Risk of Persistent Absence:

Definition: The term "Risk of Persistent Absence" refers to a situation in which a student's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for "Risk of Persistent Absence," it is typically used to describe students whose attendance is consistently low and becoming a concern. As our school communicates to parents in days, we identify children who are at Risk of PA by tracking the number of days a child has been absent, and we will follow internal school procedures (the Multi-Tiered System of Support).

Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence):

Definition: The term "Severe Absence" or "Severe Persistent Absence" is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.

Threshold: Particular focus and support will be provided to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of external agency partners.



Absence Definitions

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Authorised Absence

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised Absence

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained..
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
 - This includes children of statutory AND non-statutory age (those children under the age of 5)

Additional Policies aligned to the Attendance Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- SEND Information Report and Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy

Review

This Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the school's governing body to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with statutory requirements. Any amendments will be communicated to staff, parents, and carers as necessary.



Appendix 1: Coding Attendance in line with DFE guidance 2024:

Code /\ (Present at the school):

- Pupils must be present during registration to be counted.
- If a pupil leaves after registration, they are still counted as attending for statistical purposes.

Code L (Late arrival before the register is closed):

- The pupil arrives after the register starts but before it closes.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a consistent time limit for open registration, not exceeding 30 minutes.
- If a pupil arrives late after the register closes, mark them as absent using code U or another appropriate absence code.

Code K (Attending education provision arranged by the local authority):

- Pupil attends educational provision arranged by the local authority, not by the school.
- Examples include attending courses at college or receiving home tutoring.
- Schools must record the nature of the provision and ensure notification of absences.

Code V (Attending an educational visit or trip):

- Pupil attends a school-arranged educational visit or trip supervised by school staff.
- Must take place during the recorded session.
- If pupil doesn't attend, record absence using relevant absence code.

Code P (Participating in a sporting activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational sporting activity.
- Criteria for recording attendance include approval by the school, educational nature of the activity, and appropriate supervision.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code W (Attending work experience):

- Pupil attends work experience as part of their education arranged by the local authority or school.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must ensure safeguarding measures and record absences with relevant codes.

Code B (Attending any other approved educational activity):

- Pupil attends an approved educational activity other than sports or work experience.
- Criteria for recording attendance are similar to other approved educational activities.
- Schools must record the nature of the activity and ensure safeguarding measures.

Code D (Dual registered at another school):

- Used when a pupil is registered at more than one school, indicating absence with leave to attend the other school.
- Main examples include attendance at a pupil referral unit, hospital school, or special school temporarily.
- Schools must promptly follow up on unexpected or unexplained absences to avoid double counting.

Code C1 (Leave of absence for regulated performance or employment abroad):

- Schools grant leave for pupils to participate in regulated performances or employment abroad under specific circumstances.
- Criteria for granting leave include licenses issued by local authorities or exemptions.



 Schools must record the absence using this code and consider its impact on the pupil's education.

Code M (Leave of absence for medical or dental appointment):

- Schools encourage appointments outside of school hours; otherwise, prior agreement is necessary.
- Leave of absence is granted under specific conditions, including exceptional circumstances.
- Absences for medical or dental appointments are recorded using this code.

Code J (Leave of absence for interview for employment or admission):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to attend interviews for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- Applications for leave must be made in advance, and leave is granted based on specific criteria.
- The interview must occur during the recorded session, and the absence is classified as authorised.

Code S (Leave of absence for studying for a public examination):

- Schools can grant leave for pupils to study for public examinations under specific conditions, agreed in advance with parents.
- Study leave should be granted sparingly, and provisions must be made for pupils who choose to continue attending school for revision.
- Absences for studying for public examinations are recorded using this code.

Code X (Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school):

- Schools can grant leave for non-compulsory school-age pupils to attend school parttime under certain circumstances.
- Absences for non-compulsory school-age pupils are recorded using this code, with exceptions noted.
- For pupils subject to a part-time timetable, this code should not be used, and appropriate absence codes should be applied.

Code C2 (Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable):

- Schools can grant leave for compulsory school-age pupils to temporarily reduce their timetable to part-time in exceptional circumstances, agreed upon with parents.
- Absences for pupils with part-time timetables are recorded using this code, ensuring agreement between the school and parents.

Code C (Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances):

- Schools may grant leave of absence at their discretion, but only for exceptional circumstances.
- Each application is assessed individually, considering specific facts and circumstances.
- Absences for exceptional circumstances are recorded using this code, ensuring compliance with regulations and discretion exercised by the school.

Pregnant pupils:

- Maternity leave for pregnant pupils is treated similarly to other leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
- Schools should act reasonably and grant an appropriate period of leave considering individual circumstances, at their discretion.

Code T (Parent traveling for occupational purposes):

- Used when a pupil's parent(s) is travelling for trade or business, and the pupil is traveling with them.
- Schools should only request proof of occupational travel when genuine doubt exists about the reason for absence.



- Pupils should ideally attend schools where their parents are traveling, being dual registered at both their main school and the one they're temporarily attending.
- Classified as authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code R (Religious observance):

- Used when a pupil is absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by their religious body.
- Schools may seek guidance from the parent's religious body to ascertain such days.
- Strategies such as setting term dates around religious observance days are encouraged.
- Classified as authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code I (Illness - not medical or dental appointment):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to illness, both physical and mental health related.
- Schools should not routinely request medical evidence but may do so when necessary.
- Classified as authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code E (Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made):

- Used when a pupil is suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision has been arranged.
- Alternative provision should be arranged within six consecutive school days of suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Classified as authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code Q (Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to a failure by the local authority to provide access arrangements.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y1 (Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available):

- Used when a pupil can't attend because the school is beyond walking distance and the usual transport provided by the school or local authority is unavailable.
- Walking distances for different age groups are specified.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y2 (Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel):

- Indicates a pupil's inability to attend school due to widespread travel disruptions caused by emergencies at the local, national, or international level.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y3 (Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed):

- Used when part of the school premises is unusable, and the pupil cannot practically be accommodated in the remaining usable parts.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y4 (Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed):

- Applied when the entire school site is unexpectedly closed, such as due to adverse weather.
- Attendance registers are not taken, and pupils are marked with this code to signify the closure.
- Not applicable for planned closures like weekends or holidays.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y5 (Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention):

• Used when a pupil is unable to attend due to being in police detention, remanded, or serving a sentence of detention.



- Communication with the Youth Offending Team is encouraged to support educational needs during detention.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y6 (Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law):

- Applied when a pupil's travel or attendance at school would violate public health guidance or legislation related to disease transmission.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause):

- Used for an unavoidable cause preventing a pupil from attending school, not covered by other specific codes.
- The nature of the unavoidable cause must be recorded.
- Classified as not a possible attendance for statistical purposes.

Code G (Holiday not granted by the school):

- Used when a pupil is absent for a holiday that the school did not approve in advance.
- Schools cannot retrospectively grant leave of absence, and absence for holidays without prior approval is considered unauthorised.
- Classified as unauthorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code N (Reason for absence not yet established):

- Employed when the reason for a pupil's absence has not been determined before the register closes.
- Schools must make efforts to ascertain the reason for absence promptly.
- If the reason cannot be established within five school days, the absence must be amended to Code O.
- Classified as unauthorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code O (Absent in other or unknown circumstances):

- Used when no reason for absence is established, or the school is not satisfied with the reason given, which doesn't align with authorised codes.
- Classified as unauthorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code U (Arrived in school after registration closed):

- Applied when a pupil arrives late after the register has closed but before the end of the session.
- Schools should discourage late arrival and set a specific time limit for registering attendance.
- Late arrival beyond the specified time results in the pupil being marked as absent.
- Classified as unauthorised absence for statistical purposes.

Administrative Code Z (Prospective pupil not on admission register):

- Utilized to set up registers in advance for prospective pupils who have not yet officially joined the school.
- Aims to streamline administrative processes.