

Guidance

on

School Attendance
Codes

June 2010

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Guidance on School Attendance Codes

Introduction

Purpose of this document

The Welsh Assembly Government launched “Behaving and Attending: the Action Plan for Responding to the Behaviour and Attendance Review” on 30 March 2009. A key action in it was: “To produce an All-Wales Attendance Framework which would include revising current school attendance codes and producing guidance”.

In response to this, Welsh Assembly Government officials have met with partners in schools and local authorities to:

- i) consider the deficiencies in the current set of codes and guidance notes;
- ii) produce a revised and comprehensive list of codes; and
- iii) produce accompanying guidance on the codes.

This document sets out the list of revised codes for use in all schools in Wales.

The need for the revision of the present coding system

Our intention for introducing the new codes is to facilitate their consistent use in the recording of attendance information across Wales. We have worked with school software suppliers to facilitate the hard coding of the codes into school software packages used to record attendance. This will support a more consistent approach to collecting school attendance data across Wales. It will also allow greater potential for exploring further the reasons why pupils are absent, improving the safeguarding and tracking of pupils and in turn putting in place strategies to deal effectively with specific problems.

Overview of the changes: Impact on school attendance figures

The majority of the changes represent a more detailed split of the current codes and therefore do not affect the overall classification of attendance as present or authorised/unauthorised absence. However there are a small number of more significant changes which may affect a school’s overall attendance figures. The main changes are:

- A new 5th statistical category of ‘not required to attend’ to be used for a small number of specific infrequent circumstances. This category covers absence due to the partial closure of a school e.g. where some of the pupils cannot attend due to bad weather. They should no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.
- Where Traveller children are registered at more than one school and are present at one of those schools, the other school (s) at which they are registered can record them as receiving approved educational activity. They should no longer be recorded as an authorised absence.

- A young offender may now only be deleted from the register where his or her period of custody is for at least four months and where the school has reasonable grounds for believing that the pupil will not be returning to school at the end of that period. He or she will be recorded as an authorised absence until his or her name is deleted from the register. If an alternative approved educational activity is provided during the period of custody, the school may record the pupil as receiving approved educational activity. Previously, a pupil's name could be deleted from the register if he or she had been absent for 4 weeks and had been detained by court order.

Section 1: Legislative changes – new regulations

Some of the changes to the codes and guidance have required the introduction of new Pupil Registration Regulations. The main changes to the Regulations are as follows:

1. Schools would be required to put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that they expect the pupil to attend from previous agreement or notification and not when they actually first attend.
2. If a pupil is prevented from attending school due to exceptional circumstances, such as the whole or partial closure of the school site or where transport normally provided for that pupil by the school or the local authority is unavailable, the pupil may be marked in the attendance register as 'not required to attend'. This will be marked under the new code Y. Previously he or she would have been marked as authorised absence.
3. As previously, if a pupil is dually registered at more than one school, for any particular school session at which he/she is due to attend one school, the other school may mark him/her in the attendance register as attending an approved educational activity. This has now been extended to apply to Traveller children who are known to be attending another school at which they are registered. Such Traveller children absence will now be recorded under the D code. Previously, it was recorded as an authorised absence under the C code.
4. Where a pupil is dually registered at more than one school (including Pupil Referral Units) and he/she stops attending one of the schools, his/her name may only be deleted from the admissions register of that school when the other school or schools at which the pupil is registered has agreed to the deletion. This does not apply where the pupil has died, been permanently excluded or is of no fixed abode.
5. If a pupil does not return to school following a leave of absence, the school and the local authority would in future be required to ascertain where that pupil is. If both the school and the local authority fail, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, and the failure to return to school exceeds 10 days, the school may delete the pupil's name from the admissions register. Previously, there was no requirement to try and ascertain where the pupil was.
6. A school may delete a pupil's name from the admissions register on the ground that the pupil has an unauthorised absence of at least 20 school days; and the school has no reason to believe that the pupil cannot attend due to sickness or other unavoidable cause and both the school and the local authority have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is. Previously the period of unauthorised absence was for four weeks rather than 20 school days and there was no requirement that the school had no reason to believe that the pupil could not attend due to sickness or unavoidable cause.

7. If a pupil has been detained under an court order of custody lasting at least 4 months and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return at the end of that period, the school can delete the name of the pupil from the register. Previously, a pupil's name could be deleted from the register if he or she had been absent for 4 weeks and had been detained by court order.
8. The requirement that schools inform their local authority when a pupil's name is deleted has been extended. The school must inform the local authority as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and before deleting the pupil's name. As well as the previous requirement where parents elect to educate their own children, the requirement now applies to deletions where a pupil has:
 - ceased to attend the school and no longer lives at a reasonable distance from the school. This does not apply to pupils who are boarders;
 - been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school that he intends to continue with his education beyond the compulsory school age;
 - been detained in custody for not less than four months, and the school has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will not return to the school following his detention; or
 - has been permanently excluded from the school.
9. Where a school register is kept on computer, the school must ensure that it produces a back-up copy of the register, either electronically or on microfiche or in print at least once a month. Previously, the back-up copy had to be in printed format.

Section 2: New Guidance on the Attendance Codes

Introduction

This guidance provides assistance to schools (including independent schools) and LAs in the use of codes to record pupil attendance and absence in schools. It relates to attendance at statutory morning and afternoon registration sessions and replaces the technical completion notes for schools which support the primary and secondary school attendance return.

Schools are required to be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year or 380 sessions by the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

The guidance may be used in conjunction with systems to record attendance in “lesson by lesson” systems but schools may find that they need to record other reasons in this type of system. However, where such systems are used and the first lesson in the morning or any session in the afternoon is used to substitute for the morning and afternoon registration, then the codes in this guidance note must be used for those sessions.

The guidance should be used in conjunction with the new regulations to be introduced in 2010, which will be available at www.statutelaw.gov.uk.

The Welsh Assembly Government believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to the Assembly Government without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will assist schools, local authorities and Assembly Government in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school. They can use this information to formulate interventions to address deteriorating attendance, poor attendance, persistent absence and other issues that the data reveals.

Further Guidance

Further guidance on all issues to do with school attendance can be found on the Assembly Government website at:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy_strategy_and_planning/schools/339214-wag/inclusionpupilsupportguidance/section3/?lang=en

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/policy_strategy_and_planning/schools/339214-wag/inclusionpupilsupportguidance/section4/?lang=en

Key to New Attendance Codes

The recommended codes are grouped under the following 5 statistical categories:

- present;
- approved educational activity (treated as present);
- authorised absence;
- unauthorised absence;
- not required to attend.

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
A	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (ie present at another school or at a PRU)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	authorised absence
I	Illness	authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	authorised absence
S	Study leave	authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	unauthorised absence

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	unauthorised absence
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	not required to attend

Statistical Category: Present

Registration Code: A

Brief Description	Present / = am \ = pm
Statistical Meaning	Present
Legal Meaning	Present
Physical Meaning	In for whole session
Use	Present in school during registration

Additional useful information:

- Pupils should not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. Activities outside the school day should not be recorded as present at registration for a session during the school day. This would erroneously make it appear that the pupil attended lessons during that session which could have unwanted consequences.
- Pupils who are present at facilities or provision in school other than mainstream lessons, such as learning support units and so-called “internal exclusion”, are recorded in the same way as other pupils, i.e. schools should use the normal codes for present if the pupils are present at registration and the appropriate code for absence if they are absent.
- If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.
- The afternoon registration must take place at the start or during the session, not at the end of the previous session or during the break between sessions.
- For health and safety and safeguarding reasons, schools need to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. This might be achieved through a paper system in the school office, such as requiring pupils to sign in and out as they come and go, to record that a pupil has left the school premises during the session. Systems such as “lesson monitoring” can also help schools identify pupils who are missing from lessons.
- Schools may wish to have additional codes in their “lesson monitoring” systems to record where pupils are when they are not in mainstream lessons. This is acceptable but these additional codes cannot be fed in to the school Census system. If the first lesson in the morning or any session in the afternoon is used to substitute for the morning and afternoon registration, then the codes in this guidance note must be used for those sessions.

- The Assembly Government advises schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the register was taken. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)
- Under the School Day and School Year Regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in internal exclusions units or shared exclusions units. However they must have regard to Welsh Assembly Government advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the regulatory requirement to offer 380 sessions to all pupils.
- Where schools set different session times, they should close the register 30 minutes after the register was taken for that group of pupils. For example if the main school day started at 8.30am but the internal exclusion unit (or shared exclusion unit) started at 9.30am:
 - the register for the main school should close at 9.00am; and
 - the register for the exclusion unit will close at 10.00am.

(See Code L and Code U)

- **For safeguarding and educational reasons, schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through “First Day Calling” procedures.**

Registration Code: L

Brief Description	Late (before registers closed)
Statistical Meaning	Present
Legal Meaning	Present
Physical Meaning	Late for session
Use	<p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open.</p> <p>In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.</p>

Additional useful information

Many schools/LAs have asked if schools could have an agreed time for the close of registration. This is not possible due to the individual needs of each school.

The Assembly Government advises that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)

Under the School Day and School Year regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in exclusions units. However they must have regard to the Assembly Government advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the requirement to offer 380 sessions.

Where schools set different session times, they should close the register 30 minutes after the register was taken for that group of pupils. For example if the main school day started at 8.30am but the exclusion unit started at 9.30am:

- the register for the main school should close at 9.00am; and
- the register for the exclusion unit will close at 10.00am.

(See also Code U)

- **For safeguarding and educational reasons, schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through “First Day Calling” procedures.**

Statistical Category: Approved Educational Activity

Registration Code: B

Brief Description	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Where a registered pupil on roll is currently being educated off-site at a supervised activity approved by the school.

Additional useful information

This code can be used for all pupils, including Travellers' children, who are present at educational provision which is not in the school.

Examples of when this code would be used are:

- attending taster days at other schools;
- pupils attending another school as 'guest pupils' (note a pupil who attends another school as part of a regular pattern must be dual registered – see Code D);
- pupils attending vocational courses at college;
- pupils attending alternative provision arranged and or agreed by the school; and
- pupils undertaking work experience as part of an alternative curriculum or alternative provision (pupils undertaking work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996 should be recorded under Code W).

For educational and safeguarding reasons, schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity provided "off site" can notify the school of any absences by individual pupils so that the school can record the pupil absence using the relevant absence code.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded. This code must not be used when pupils are attending alternative provision on the school's premises.

Schools should **not** use this code if a pupil has an agreed part-time timetable as part of reintegration or transition. The school are authorising the absence for the sessions that the pupil is not required to be in school and the pupil should be recorded as Code C for those sessions. Whilst part-time timetables are a useful technique to help pupils adapt or re-adapt to the school setting, they have the effect of reducing the

sessions on offer to those pupils to under the minimum 380 sessions. Such timetables should be a short term measure.

Schools should **not** use this code to record study leave. Study leave is unsupervised time away from school for pupils to prepare for their public examinations and many pupils treat such time as extra holidays and do no study. As a result, study leave does not meet the legal definition of approved educational activity.

Schools should **not** use this code to record pupil review days if pupils are simply sent home with homework and private study. Like study leave it is unsupervised and usually treated as an extra holiday by pupils. It therefore would not meet the legal definition of approved educational activity. The code can be used where schools arranged supervised, off-site educational activities to replace the normal lessons whilst review interviews are held.

Registration Code: D

Brief Description	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. Where a pupil is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil approved educational activity while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child. Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.

Additional useful information

This code is to be used when a pupil is dually registered at two schools and, for the session in question, they are not required to attend your school.

The school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.

Pupils who are dually registered at two schools should be registered as such in both schools' information management systems (MIS) under "pupil enrolment status". For example - a student who is on roll at school A but attending school B (which could be the PRU or a special school).

- School A - record M (Main – dual registration)
- School B – record S (Subsidiary – dual registration)

This code can be used for Traveller children when it is known that:

- they are attending another school; and
- are dually registered at both schools.

It should NOT be used unless these two conditions are met.

Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the school where the pupil is scheduled to be can notify the "other" school of any absences by individual pupils so that both schools can record the pupil absence using the relevant absence code. For safeguarding and educational reasons, one of the schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through "First Day Calling" procedures.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Registration Code: P

Brief Description	Approved sporting activity
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	The pupil is participating in or attending an approved sporting activity.

Additional useful information

The activity must be supervised by a person authorised on that behalf by the Head Teacher of the school.

The pupil must be taking part in the activity. Spectating at events such as following the local football club and sporting victory parades must not be treated as approved educational activity.

If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. However, the final decision rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Registration Code: V

Brief Description	Educational visit or trip
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	School organised trips and visits, including residential trips. Can also be used for other trips of a strictly educational nature, which are arranged by other organisations, provided they are supervised.

Additional useful information

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Registration Code: J

Brief Description	Interview
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Interviews with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.

Additional useful information:

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher education establishment (Yr 11 only). It should not be used for interviews for other employment.

The school should be satisfied that the interview is linked to future education or employment prospects, and the school staff should normally ask for advance notice and proof of the appointment.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Registration Code: W

Brief Description	Work experience
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996. Schools must ensure that they check on the attendance of the pupil at the work experience placement and mark the register accordingly.

Additional useful information

Work experience is for pupils in the last two years of compulsory schooling. A child shall be taken to be in his/her last year of compulsory schooling from the beginning of the term at his/her school which precedes the beginning of the school year in which he/she would cease to be of compulsory school age.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Work experience undertaken as part of an alternative curriculum or alternative provision should *not* be recorded using this code. Such work experience is legitimate education “off site” and should be recorded using Code B.

Statistical Category: Authorised Absence

Registration Code: C

Brief Description	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Special occasions at the discretion of the school

Additional useful information

(These examples are illustrative and not meant to be exhaustive.)

Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking the following into account:

- the nature of the event for which leave is sought;
- its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?);
- whether the parent gave advance notice; and
- the pupil's overall attendance pattern.

Examples might include special occasions such as attending the wedding of a family member, family bereavement, prison visits.

Public Performances

- Where a pupil is absent because they are taking part in a public performance, it is still the school which decides whether to authorise the absence, even if the pupil is being employed under a licence issued by a local authority.

Young Carers

- In a genuine crisis a school can approve absence for a child to care for a relative until other arrangements can be made. The school should set a time limit for the absence and set some school work so the pupil does not fall behind while at home.

Birth of a Child

- Support should be directed to keeping the pupil in school wherever possible, and to return her to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth.

- A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.

At the request of the school

A pupil has been placed on an agreed part-time timetable e.g. as part of a staggered intake or reintegration package.

Registration Code: F

Brief Description	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time. They must apply for leave in advance of taking it. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. Schools should invite parents to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.</p> <p>Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Pupils who fail to return to school within 10 days of the end of extended leave of absence may be deleted if both the school and LA fail to locate them and they do not have good reason to be absent.</p>

Additional useful information:

This category is for the whole of an extended holiday where the head teacher has agreed there are exceptional circumstances.

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday (whether authorised or not) in an academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance (for primary schools). A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual Assembly Government absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%** (for secondary schools).

If a school agrees absence and the pupil goes on holiday for 10 days or fewer, absence is authorised (use Code H).

If the parents do not apply for the leave of absence in advance of taking it the pupil must be recorded as unauthorised absence using Code G.

If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised (Code G). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised (Code G).

If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances why the pupil should be granted approval for a holiday of more than 10 days, this approval can be given and the absence would be authorised and recorded under Code F. Examples include:

- parent working abroad for a fixed, medium term period; and
- returning to country of origin.

Registration Code: H

Brief Description	Family Holiday (agreed)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time and parents must apply for the leave in advance of taking it. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress; and whether circumstances warrant it. Schools should invite parents to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.</p> <p>Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p>

Additional useful information

A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during one whole academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance (for primary schools). A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual Assembly Government absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%** for secondary schools.

If a school agrees absence and the pupil goes on holiday for 10 days or less, absence is authorised (use Code H).

If the parents do not apply for the leave of absence in advance of taking it the pupil must be recorded as unauthorised absence using Code G, as schools cannot approve family holidays retrospectively.

If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised (Code G). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised (Code G).

If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances why the pupil should be granted approval for a holiday of more than 10 days, this approval can be given and the absence would be authorised and recorded under Code F.

Registration Code: I

Brief Description	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>Missing registration through illness is an authorised absence. If a pupil is present for registration but returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session. Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.</p> <p>If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can record the absence as unauthorised absence (Code O) but should advise parents of the school's intention. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absence on the grounds of illness.</p> <p>A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.</p>

Additional useful information

This code is to be used when parents phone to say that their child is ill. Parents should always be advised to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is ill. It could also be used when parents send a letter after the period of illness to explain the child's absence.

Absence at registration due to a medical, dental or hospital appointment should be recorded using Code M.

While schools can request medical evidence to support absence on the grounds of illness, schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Unnecessary requests will block GP's appointments which, in turn, could delay treatment of others and doctors report that it is difficult to provide retrospective evidence, particularly if they did not treat the pupil. Medical evidence can take the form of sight of prescriptions, appointments cards, etc. rather than Doctors' Notes.

Registration Code: M

Brief Description	Medical/Dental appointments
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence.</p> <p>Parents and pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attender.</p> <p>If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, no absence need be recorded for that session. Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.</p> <p>A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.</p>

Additional useful information

For Health and Safety reasons a system must be in place to record that a pupil has either arrived at school or left the premises during the session. Medical appointments include:

- attendance at a GP's surgery;
- attendance at a dentist's surgery; and
- hospital appointments (not a stay in hospital, for which Code I should be used).

Registration Code: S

Brief Description	Study leave
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Study leave should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.

Additional useful information

Many schools are electing to seek alternatives to study leave as there is evidence that a high proportion of students do not have the skills, or are not inclined, to make the best use of large amounts of unsupervised and unstructured revision time.

The Welsh Joint Educational Committee website has study tips for students undergoing exams on <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=91>.

Approved Educational Activity must be supervised by someone approved by the school. It must also take place during the session for which the mark is recorded. As study leave is unsupervised and schools cannot assume that it took place during the school session it does not meet these regulatory requirements.

Schools should bear in mind that any session given to pupils as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

When calculating the use of study leave, and therefore authorised absence, schools must bear in mind that pupils cannot leave school until the last Friday in June.

Pupils who are present at examinations should not be marked using this code.

Registration Code: E

Brief Description	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>A pupil who is excluded for a fixed period remains on the school roll but cannot attend the school. A pupil who is permanently excluded remains on the school roll until the appeal process has been completed.</p> <p>Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the fifteenth day of exclusion but some schools and LAs opt to make provision earlier than this. Absence due to fixed term exclusion where no alternative provision is in place is authorised as the absence results from decisions made by the school.</p> <p>Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded child for whom alternative provision is not made should be treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.</p>

Additional useful information

This code is used to record pupils' absence because:

- they have been excluded; **and**
- no provision has been made for them to continue their education whilst excluded.

The school is responsible for making alternative arrangements for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll either directly or in conjunction with an agreed provider of alternative provision. This provision **must** be in place from the sixteenth day of a pupil's permanent exclusion and the sixteenth day of fixed term exclusion. Further guidance on exclusions is available at:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/exclusionguidance/?lang=en>.

If the alternative provision made is at a PRU or a shared exclusion unit at another school, the pupil should be recorded under attendance Code D as the pupil is dually registered at both institutions. In these circumstances, the pupil's registration status as recorded in the school Management Information System (MIS) will need to be changed from Current single registration (C) to Current main (Dual registration) (M). If the pupil is "internally excluded" or is attending a shared exclusion unit within the school then the attendance should be recorded using the normal marks for present.

If the alternative provision made is attendance at any other provider (agreed by the local authority*), the pupil should be recorded under Code B as the pupil is being educated off site.

In all cases where alternative provision is made and the pupil is absent, the absence should be recorded using the appropriate code for that activity and not Code E.

If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day:

- after the appeal panel's confirmation of permanent exclusion;
- on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made;
- after the parent confirms in writing that they do not intend to appeal; or
- if the pupil takes up a place elsewhere.

Registration Code: R

Brief Description	Religious observance
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Legal Meaning	Absent
Use	Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

Additional useful information

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not "exclusively set aside for religious observance" by the religious body are not marked using Code R.

Registration Code: T

Brief Description	Traveller absence
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Traveller child when the family is travelling

Additional useful information

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.

To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling if it is the base school.

If the pupil's family are known to be travelling but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision (at a school or other provider), the absence should be authorised and recorded using Code T.

If the pupil is known to be dual registered and present at another school during the session in question, the attendance should be recorded using Code D. If the pupil is known to be present (during the session in question) at other educational activity which meet the requirements of the regulation on approved educational activity, the attendance should be marked using codes B, J, P, V or W as appropriate.

If the pupil is known to be absent from other provision for reasons other than travelling (e.g. illness, unexplained absence) the appropriate code should be used.

Children from "traveller" families are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of required to attend school. However, there is a defence available to traveller families if prosecuted for non attendance provided that the child has attended a school for at least 200 sessions in the 12 months ending when legal proceedings are started.

Statistical Category: Unauthorised Absence

Registration Code: N

Brief Description	No reason yet provided for absence
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	No reason for absence

Additional useful information

Every endeavour should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence from school. Until a reason is obtained, the absence must be coded using Code N. If no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, Code N should be replaced with Code O.

If pupils are unexpectedly absent and their parents do not contact the school, the school should contact them under first day calling arrangements.

Code N should not be left showing on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely.

Schools should ensure they have systems and procedures in place to follow up these absences and establish the reason for absence, ideally within a two week timescale.

Where a pupil is recorded initially as Code N and this is subsequently amended with a reason for the absence of the pupil, the new information is regarded as the first entry in the register and does not require that the change from Code N is associated with who made the change, when or why. The reason is that the information has just been provided. Any other change to any other information entered into either the attendance register or admissions register must be accompanied with details of the original and new entries, who made the change, when and why.

Registration Code: O

Brief Description	Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	Unauthorised Absence

Additional useful information

Examples:

- pupil's/parent's/sibling's/relative's birthday;
- shopping;
- having their hair cut;
- special treat;
- market day;
- "Couldn't get up"; and
- closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.

Registration Code: G

Brief Description	Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Use	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time and must apply for the leave in advance of taking it. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. Schools should invite parents in to school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.</p> <p>Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p>

Additional useful information

A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during one whole academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance (for primary schools).

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual Assembly Government absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%** (for secondary schools).

If a school agrees absence and the pupil goes on holiday for 10 days or less, absence is authorised (use Code H).

If the parents do not apply for the leave of absence in advance of taking it the pupil must be recorded as unauthorised absence using Code G, as the regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval.

If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised (Code G). If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised (Code G).

If the school considers that there are exceptional circumstances why the pupil should be granted approval for a holiday of more than 10 days, this approval can be given and the absence would be authorised and recorded under Code F.

Registration Code: U

Brief Description	Late (after registration closed)
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Late for session
Use	Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival, which could provide grounds for prosecution. Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.

Additional useful information

This code should be used when a pupil has arrived after the close of registration with no relevant reason to code it otherwise.

Example:

If a pupil arrives late (after registers have been closed) due to a doctor or dentist appointment, the code M would be used.

If a pupil arrives late (after registers have been closed) because they couldn't find their shoes/their school uniform was drying in the tumble dryer/their younger sibling was playing up etc, the code U would be used.

The Assembly Government advises that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)

Schools and LAs have asked if all schools could have an agreed time for the close of registration. This is not possible due to the individual needs of each school and a school's power to set different session times for different pupils (see below).

For health and safety reasons, schools need to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session. This might be achieved through a paper system in the school office to record that a pupil has arrived on the school premises during the session. "Lesson monitoring" can also help with this process.

Under the School Day and School Year Regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in exclusions units. However they must have regard to the Assembly Government advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the requirement to offer 380 sessions. Where schools set different session times, they should close the register 30 minutes after the register was taken for that group of

pupils. For example if the main school day started at 8.30am but the exclusion unit started at 9.30am:

- the register for the main school should close at 9.00am; and
- the register for the exclusion unit will close at 10.00am.

(See also Code L)

For safeguarding and educational reasons, schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through “First Day Calling” procedures.

Statistical Category: Not Required To Attend

Registration Code: X

Brief Description	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
Use	Pupils who have not attained the age of 5 years at the start of the term in which the session takes place or were 16 years before the start of the school year in which it takes place.

Additional useful information:

The Regulations require the register to be taken for both compulsory age and non-compulsory age pupils. The difference between the two set of records is that the school does not have to record whether or not the absence is authorised for non-compulsory age pupils.

However, we recommend that this code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend and use the standard codes to record other absence. This will not affect schools' and local authorities' attendance statistics, particularly those published by the Assembly Government, because the Assembly Government does not collect statistics for non-compulsory school-age pupils. It will help schools to easily identify when pupils have missed lessons. **This code must not be used to record the absence of children of compulsory school age or any form of exclusion.**

If a school places a compulsory school age pupil on a part time timetable, for example as part of re-integration, then the school is authorising the pupil's absence from the sessions not in the timetable. That absence should be recorded under Code C. Schools should not place pupils on part-time timetables for an indefinite period and should monitor it and the pupil.

If a pupil is registered at more than one school, attendance at other school(s) should be recorded under Code D with absence from them all recorded in the normal way.

Year 11 Pupils who are going onto the Year 12 (Sixth Form)

Under the New Regulations, schools cannot delete Year 11 pupils who intend to remain at the school and enter the Sixth Form (Year 12) from the school registers. Once the pupils have reached the end of their compulsory school-age, which is on the last Friday in June, they can be recorded using this code if the school has not asked them to attend.

Registration Code: Y

Brief Description	Forced and Partial Closure
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or not attending because the pupils have a different school year to other pupils in the school.
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
Use	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available. Or where the school has different term dates for different groups of pupils.

Additional useful information

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

The Education (School Day and School Year) Regulations 1999 require schools to be open to each compulsory school-age pupil for 380 sessions a year but schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups. Where they do this, schools can use Code Y to record that a year group is not due to attend. Schools and local authorities can use the attendance register to monitor the offer made to pupils because there must be at least 380 session recorded using codes / \ or B to W for each pupil who is registered at the school for the whole year.

Closed due to unavoidable cause

For the purposes of recording attendance and absence, “official transport” is that arranged and funded by the school or local authority such as dedicated buses, taxis and public transport passes.

Examples include:

- road conditions make some roads impassable with the result that the school bus or taxi can only collect some of the pupils;
- public transport not available to those issued with passes due to major incident;
- burst boiler;
- floods; and
- damage.

This code should **not** be used for planned closures of the school site which should be recorded as Code #. It must **not** be used for pupils on part-time timetables or any form of exclusion.

This mark should be used where the official transport is withdrawn by the school or local authority (or with its agreement). It should not be used:

- for pupils who “miss the bus” and could use a later service thereby arriving late;
- when pupils’ normal mode of transport is unavailable, such as a being driven their by parents, but alternatives are available; or
- for pupils’ who normally walk to school.

Where the whole school is forced to close in exceptional circumstances, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of a “system wide” entry for the whole school and applying the enforced closure to all pupils in the school.

Where only part of the school is forced to close in exceptional circumstances, e.g. one site housing 2 year groups or classes, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of selecting the year groups or classes and applying the partial enforced closure to all pupils in the year group or class.

Where the enforced closure relates to pupils following a failure of school/LA provided transport, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of selecting the pupils as a group and applying the partial enforced closure to all pupils in that group.

Registration Code: Z

Brief Description	Pupil not on roll
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	Pupil not registered at the school
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
Use	For administration purposes for pupils expected to join the school roll

Additional useful information:

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers before pupils are due to join and ease administration.

School MIS systems store details of pupils who are to be admitted in a “pre admission group” which is then “rolled forward” at the start of term. This helps schools to have details on new pupils in their MIS system as soon as possible. However, some pupils do not turn up (because they have started somewhere else) but they are still “on roll” as far as the computer is concerned until they are made a “leaver”. While “on roll” in this way, they will be shown as “unauthorised” absent unless they can be marked as “not yet on roll” in the computer.

Under the New Regulations, schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend **not**, as previously, when they first attend. Schools should also remember that all pupils on the admissions register must also be entered on the attendance register and their attendance recorded.

If a pupil is expected to arrive at a school i.e. in a “pre admission group”, but does not, in fact, arrive to attend the school, the school should advise the LA immediately and mark the pupil using Code N. When the school and LA locate the pupil, they should mark the pupil accordingly. For example, if it is found that the pupil is at another school, the pupil can be treated as dual registered (see Code D) and then removed from the school roll.

Registration Code:

Brief Description	School closed to pupils
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	No session held
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
Use	For planned closures of the whole school

Additional useful information:

This code should be used for whole school planned closures. Examples are:

- between terms;
- half terms;
- occasional days when the whole school (including staff) are on holiday;
- weekends (if required by the system);
- up to 5 no-contact days when teachers are at work but not teaching and when pupils are not required to attend;
- any additional no contact days defined by regulation to be used for curriculum planning/training; and
- use of schools as polling stations.

This code should **not** be used for enforced closures of all or part of the school, site. Code Y is the appropriate code (see guidance on Code Y).