Greenmount Primary School

Policy for

Attendance and Punctuality

Chronology:
This policy replaces the one agreed by the Full Governing Body on 30th September 2024.
This policy was updated by the Head Teacher on 29th July 2025 and is relevant for the academic year 2025 - 2026

This policy reflects the "Working together to improve attendance" guidance which came into effect from 19th August 2024.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

The policy also references Ofsted's report (February 2022) 'Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence.'

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1. Introduction

1.1 At Greenmount Primary School we expect all pupils to:

- Attend every school day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school prepared for the day

1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.

1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.

1.4 We will follow the model set out by the DfE:
Expect – Monitor – Listen and Understand – Facilitate Support – Formalise Support - Enforce

1.5 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (March 2024) Working together to improve school attendance which applies from August 2024.

1.6 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the Education Act 1996.

1.7 Our approach to securing good attendance is based on the principle of support first. In line with Ofsted's research, our approach can be summarised as *'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.'*

1.8 Every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.

1.8 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see 'How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster'.

Parents should follow the latest public health advice in relation to COVID-19.

1.9 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.

1.10 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

2. Expectations

2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.

2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is the Head Teacher, Mr D W Griffith, who can be contacted via the school office: greenmount@bury.gov.uk or 01204 884031

2.3 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.4 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance.

2.5 The **school** will:

- Accurately record all attendances, absences and lates
- Provide parents with a temly statement of attendance (sent to parents at the beginning of the Spring and Summer terms referring to the previous term)
- Provide an annual statement of attendance to be included with the annual school report
- Follow up any unexplained absences, at 9.15 a.m., by a text (or by phone if no response to the text is received)
- Reply to requests for absence in a timely fashion
- Inform parents of holiday and term dates as soon as they are agreed by the trust
- Inform parents of any unavoidable school closure (e.g. due to snow, due to industrial action)
- Set a realistic annual attendance target.
- Work with parents where a child's attendance is becoming a concern

2.5 We expect all our **parents/carers** to:

- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return.
- Follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community (- see 'How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster'.
- Keep their child off school for 48 hours after their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.
- Follow the UK Government's latest advice re COVID-19 and periods of isolation.
- Submit any requests for absence during term time at least 10 days prior to the proposed absence.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
- Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
- Support us by becoming involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

2.5 We expect all of our **pupils** to:

- Be aware of why they should attend school
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
- Speak to a trusted adult (at home or at school) if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance

3. Daily routines

3.1 At Greenmount Primary School our Senior Leaders or Pastoral Team greet our pupils at the Main Entrance. This begins at 8.45 a.m. each day. Pupils and parents/carers are then able to wait in the playground areas until classrooms are opened at 8.50 a.m. (or 8.45 a.m. in the case of inclement weather).

3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.

3.3 Our school day begins at 9.00 a.m. The morning register will open and be taken between 9.00 a.m. and 9.05 a.m. Any pupil arriving after 9.05 a.m. is required to report to the main school office with their parent/carer.

3.4 If arrival is before 9.15 a.m., then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register)

3.5 The school register will officially close at 9.15 a.m. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register).

3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance

3.7 Our afternoon session begins between 1.00 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. depending on the class with a register taken within the first five minutes of the session.

3.8 Our normal school day ends at 3.30 p.m.

4. Reporting Absence

4.1 If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school office via phone or email before 9.00 a.m. on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

4.2 If the absence continues, parents should the school office via phone or email before 9.00 a.m. **each day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:

- Text the parents/carers after the register is closed at 9.15 a.m.
- If there remains no contact by 9.30 a.m. then a telephone call will be made to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts
- If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil then, a home visit may be carried out by the Head Teacher. If the family is supported by a social worker then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.

4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission.

5. Requesting leave of absence

5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. Requests for a leave of absence should be made by email to the head teacher c/o greenmount@bury.gov.uk giving as much detail and notice as possible.

5.2 **Normally requests for holidays will be declined**, and if leave is taken, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence in the register. Any holiday taken of 5 days or more, which has not been authorised, will be referred to the Local Authority for further action.

5.3 Children with 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absences within a 10 school week rolling period will be referred to the Local Authority for further action. See Appendix 2 for list of what constitutes an unauthorised absence.

5.3 If a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

5.4 Absences may be authorised by the Head Teacher under the following circumstances:

- Open days at Secondary schools
- Medical / dental appointments
- Family funeral
- Wedding of a close family member (but not of the child's parents)
- Visiting sick relatives
- Religious observance
- Holidays for Service or Fire Brigade Personnel
- Attending approved modelling, acting or sporting activities not arranged by the school (up to ten days per year)

5.5 The school will not provide work for children to complete during periods of authorised absence.

6 Medical / Dental Appointments

6.1 Where possible, appointments should be made out of school hours.

6.2 Where this is not possible, parents are requested to inform the school by phone or email.

6.3 Proof of the appointment may be requested from parents.

6.4 Parents must report to the office when collecting a child for or returning a child after an appointment.

6.5 The school will keep a record of when children depart and return.

7. Punctuality – End of School Day

7.1 The school day ends at 3.30 p.m. Children must be collected on time, unless they are making their own way home or attending an after-school activity.

7.2 Children who are not collected by 3.40 p.m. are referred to the School Administrator who will immediately contact the parents.

7.3 With parental agreement, the child may attend GOOSE Club but the parents will be charged. If there is no space in the Club, or if alternative arrangements are not made by the parents, the child will be placed in the care of the Head Teacher (or Deputy Head Teacher)

7.4 If the child is not collected by 5.30 p.m., and we do not have further information, the Head Teacher will contact the Social Care department.

7.5 All cases of lateness at the end of the school day will be recorded.

8 Late Collection from GOOSE (Out of School Club)

8.1 Our Out of School Club is open until 6.00 p.m. If parents/carers know that they are not going to be able to pick up their children before GOOSE closes, they are expected to phone GOOSE staff to let them know. In this case, two members of staff will wait with the children until they are collected. If parents/carers are expecting to be more than a few minutes late, we would encourage them to make alternative arrangement for their child's collection (e.g. by a friend or neighbour) and to inform GOOSE staff of this.

8.2 If GOOSE staff have not been informed or not been able to make contact with parents/carers (using the school's emergency contact numbers) by 6.30 p.m., then the GOOSE staff will contact the Head Teacher or designated senior member of school staff who will contact the Social Care department.

8.3 The current Terms and Conditions document for GOOSE outlines the charges that are made to parents/carers for late collection.

9. Managing Attendance

9.1 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We promote the values of good attendance with children and families.

9.2 We regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 9.5 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.

9.3 As soon as a child's attendance drops below 93%, we begin to monitor it on a weekly basis. If there are no signs of improvement, parents are contacted to discuss how we can support them to improve their child's attendance.

9.3 At end of each term, an individual Attendance Summary is provided for parents together with an accompanying letter from the Head Teacher. Where attendance has dropped below 93%, parents are asked to consider how they can improve their child's attendance. Where the head teacher remains concerned about an individual child's attendance, a meeting with the parent/carer will be requested.

9.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absence (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below).

9.5 We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support. Where relevant, the support would involve following the Emotionally Based School Avoidance pathway.

9.6 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

9.7 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' tool, or through discussion within a team around the school meeting.

9.8 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.

9.9 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities, we will make any necessary referrals.

9.10 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

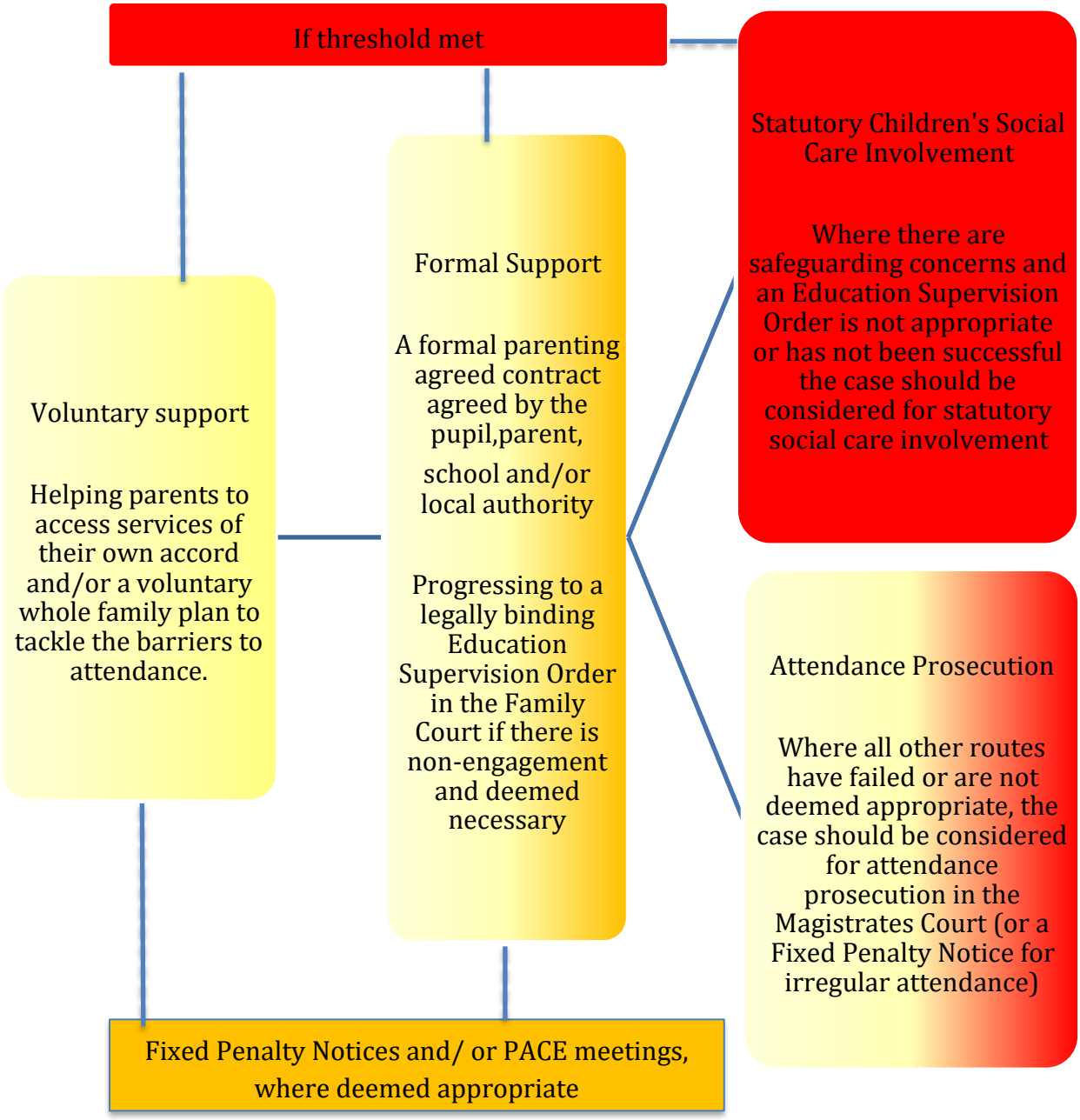
10. Voluntary support, formal support and statutory action

10.1 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Reward systems for improved attendance
- Discussion with the Virtual School where a child is looked after and/or has a social worker
- Trauma informed approaches
- Anxiety-based school avoidance resources
- Time-limited part-time timetables
- Working with attendance professionals external to the school
- Early Help referrals
- Referrals to support agencies
- Attendance panels
- Attendance support plans
- Reintegration support packages

10.2 Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centred, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

10.3 Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



10.4 We will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices (see section 11)

10.5 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

11 Fixed penalty notices

11.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

11.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

11.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended in 2013, where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices **will** be issued for unauthorised holidays in term time.

11.4 Changes which came into effect from September 2024 to the Fixed Penalty Notice system for Unauthorised Holidays are explained in the DfE document "Working Together to Improve Attendance" (March 2024) and set out in Appendix 3 for easy reference.

11.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

Note: This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School attendance Guidance and referenced the Statutory Guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties governing school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010,2011,2013,2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and 2013 amendment)

This policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, our school's child protection and safeguarding policy and our school's behaviour policy

Appendix 1

Flow chart showing how schools, and local partners, work with families to improve attendance

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen, to understand barriers to attendance and to agree how all partners can work together to resolve them

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Appendix 2 – Absence Categories and Codes (relevant to Primary Phase)

Authorised Absences

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed.

The pupil was absent when the register started being taken (9.05 a.m.) but arrives before the register is closed (9.15 a.m.) This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site). A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision (regulation 10(5)), examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring. Schools should ensure that the arrangements are in place whereby the provider notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded. If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

A pupil can only be recorded as attending a place for an approved educational activity if:

• the place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;

• the activity is of an educational nature;

• the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and

• the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity. For further informationsee the DfE guidance.

Code D: Dual registered at another school Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3 313. The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. If a pupil is present at registration but then leaves the school to attend a medical or dental appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code R: Religious observance. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment). The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools are not expected to routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness absences. Schools should only request reasonable medical evidence in cases where they need clarification to accurately record absence in the attendance register This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made. This code is classified for statistical purposes as authorised absence.

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements. The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is **normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority** is not available. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed Relevant regulation 10(10) 378. Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

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

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.

Unauthorised Absences

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed (9.30 a.m.) Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code #: Planned whole school closure. Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as: • days between terms; • half terms; • occasional days (for example, bank holidays); • weekends (where it is required by the management information system); • up to 5 non-educational days; and • use of the whole school as a polling station. This code is not collected for statistical purpose.

Appendix 3 – Fixed Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

• The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

• A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

• A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous school was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years. These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.