

**Fitzwaryn School**

# Attendance Guidance

## Contents

1: Introduction .....	2
2: Aims .....	2
3: Legislation and guidance .....	2
4: School's Roles and Responsibilities .....	2
4.1 The governing board .....	2
4.2 The Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers .....	2
4.3 The office staff .....	3
4.4 Class teachers .....	3
5: Recording Absence .....	3
5.1 Registration .....	3
5.2 Categorising Absence .....	3
5.3 Unplanned Absence .....	4
5.4 Following up unexplained absence .....	4
5.5 Planned Absence .....	4
6: Approved Educational Activity .....	5
7: Attendance responsibilities .....	5
7.1 All pupils .....	6
7.2 Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent .....	7
7.3 Persistently absent pupils .....	8
7.4 Severely absent pupils .....	9
7.5 Support for pupils with medical conditions .....	10
7.6 Attendance Flow Chart .....	11
8: County Attendance Team .....	12
9: Collection and Analysis of Data .....	12
Appendix 1: attendance codes .....	13
Appendix 2: .....	15
Appendix 3: .....	16

# 1: Introduction

Fitzwaryn School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff.

## 2: Aims

---

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

## 3: Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern 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 \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 4: School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Fitzwaryn School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### 4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 4.2 The Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

The Deputy Headteachers have a responsibility for attendance at the school and act alongside the office staff as an attendance officer.

### 4.3 The office staff

The office staff act as attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Follows policy to ensure implementation
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher and Deputy Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence
- Manages and maintains correspondences
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Office staff are expected to check absence lines, emails and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. Office staff are expected to contact parents when absence has not been reported as per the policy guidelines

### 4.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis. Teachers record absence as an N code and attendance and correct codes are added by the school office. Class teachers are responsible for working with parents to ensure improved attendance for identified pupils. Class teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about patterns of absence to the Deputy Headteacher, office staff and on CPOMS when it is considered a Safeguarding issue.

## 5: Recording Absence

### 5.1 Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers (see appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes).

Registers will be marked between **9.00 and 9.15** and **1.00 and 1.15** by the class teacher (dependent on the class's individual needs).

Registers will close at **9.30** and **1.30**.

### 5.2 Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked as unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

### 5.3 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

The school will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 5.4 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take further action e.g., contact police, depending on the level of risk.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer and/or complete a home visit.

### 5.5 Planned Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, the headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example
  - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. family wedding
  - in exceptional circumstances, where permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance
- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
- where the pupil has a medical appointment, although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand (we do understand that some of our pupils at Fitzwaryn School have many medical appointments and these are unavoidable. For this reason, we hold many clinics in school to help minimise absence and support parents and carers)

- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g., extreme weather conditions
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- in other exceptional circumstance (e.g., a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

## 6: Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

## 7: Attendance responsibilities

The following tables outline the responsibilities for parents, schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities to maintain high levels of attendance ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.pdf](#)). These are for:

- All pupils
- Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (attendance between 92% and 90%)
- Persistently absent pupils (attendance less than 90%)
- Severely absent pupils (attendance less than 50%)

## 7.1 All pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

## 7.2 Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p> <p>Individual circumstances to be reviewed by the SLT and a letter sent out highlighting attendance levels (see Appendix B) if required.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

### 7.3 Persistently absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p> <p>Individual circumstances to be reviewed and a letter sent out highlighting attendance levels (see Appendix C) if required.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>



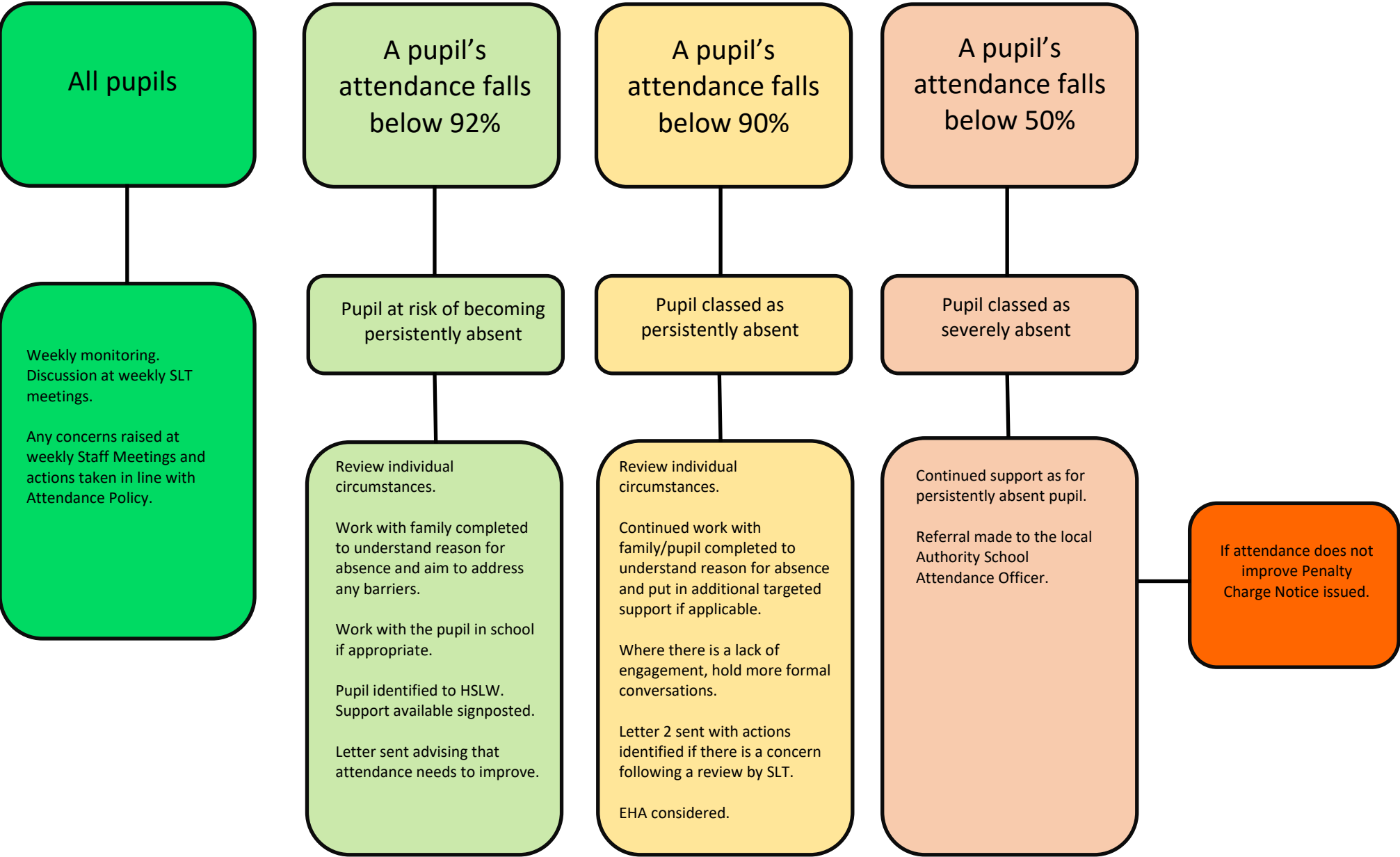
#### 7.4 Severely absent pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p> <p>Implement an individualised parenting contract.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

## 7.5 Support for pupils with medical conditions

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

7.6 Attendance Flow Chart



## 8: County Attendance Team

Fitzwaryn's aim is to work with parents and carers to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A). The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with an Early Help Assessment. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

## 9: Collection and Analysis of Data

As a school, we collect attendance data on our management information system, Arbor. As per legal requirements, this data is shared with the local authority and nationally.

Internally, we check this data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence across the school and at an individual level with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as PA. The office and Senior Leaders will then monitor these pupils and try to work with families to improve attendance.

Attendance is a standing agenda item on weekly SLT meetings. Weekly data is provided, and any concerns are discussed. These are then raised at weekly Staff Meetings, flagging pupils at risk of becoming absent with teaching staff. Actions are then completed in line with the Attendance Flow Chart on an individualized basis.

Attendance certificates are shared with parents/carers termly (6 times a year).

This data is then monitored by our Safeguarding Governor shared with the Governors in an anonymous way. This data is also shared with the Trustees to ensure the school are keeping PA to its lowest levels. Attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of free school meals or are vulnerable are a focus of this monitoring.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2:

**Child's Name:**  
**Attendance:**

**Date:**

Dear xxxxxxxxxx

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxxxx's attendance rate currently stands at xx%, which is below the school minimum target rate of 92%. Please see enclosed attendance certificate.

Whilst we accept that pupils may be ill from time to time, poor attendance has a negative impact on his/her learning. If attendance for the year is 90% then the pupil will have been absent for the equivalent of nearly 4 weeks.

If there any in school or out of school barriers then please discuss them with us and we can look at how these can be addressed.

xxxxx's attendance will now be closely monitored for the next four weeks and we expect his/her attendance to significantly improve in that time period.

Should this target not be achieved, it may be necessary to ask you to attend a meeting at school to discuss the matter in more detail.

We would also like to remind you that any absence from school must be explained by letter and any persistent absence, due to medical reasons, will need to be supported by a medical note or signed prescription from the GP, unless this is already covered by an existing medical condition we are already aware of. We also require you to telephone the school on the first day of any absence.

If you wish to discuss this or any other issue relating to attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Coneboy  
Headteacher



**Registered Office:** Fitzwaryn School, Denchworth Road, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9ET  
**Tel:** 01235 764504 **Website:** [www.pract.org.uk](http://www.pract.org.uk)  
**Corporation Registration No.** 8340120

Appendix 3:

**Child's Name:**

**Date:**

**Attendance:**

Dear xxxxxxxxxx

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxxxx's attendance rate currently stands at xx%, which means their attendance is classed as Persistently Absent as it is below 90%. Please see enclosed attendance certificate.

We would like to invite you for a meeting with one of our Senior Leadership Team to discuss any in school or out of school barriers and how we can address these. We can also explore different support options available.

Whilst we accept that pupils may be ill from time to time, poor attendance has a negative impact on his/her learning. If attendance for the year is 90% then the pupil will have been absent for the equivalent of nearly 4 weeks.

We would also like to remind you that any absence from school must be explained by letter and any persistent absence, due to medical reasons, will need to be supported by a medical note or signed prescription from the GP, unless this is already covered by an existing medical condition we are already aware of. We also require you to telephone the school on the first day of any absence.

Please contact the school to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Coneboy  
Headteacher



**Registered Office:** Fitzwaryn School, Denchworth Road, Wantage, Oxon OX12 9ET  
**Tel:** 01235 764504 **Website:** [www.pract.org.uk](http://www.pract.org.uk)  
**Corporation Registration No.** 8340120