



TAUNTON  
— SCHOOL —

# ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

**Policy Lead** – Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School) & Whole School Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Last Review** – September 2025

**Review Schedule** - Annually or following a change in legislation

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## Statement of intent

This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Taunton School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school and improving a pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare.

We understand that barriers to attendance are often wide-ranging and complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents to support good attendance.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support and pastoral support – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring School is a welcoming and engaging environment where pupils feel a sense of belonging.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with pupils and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance and absence policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The Senior Attendance Champion is Lyndsay White, DSL and Senior School Deputy Head Pastoral.  
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The following leaders will take responsibility for attendance in their respective areas of School:

Nursery & TPPS: Becky Lewis – [Becky.Lewis@tauntonschool.co.uk](mailto:Becky.Lewis@tauntonschool.co.uk)

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## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2024)
- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing Remote Education: Guidance for Schools'
- DfE (2025) 'Summary of responsibilities for children missing education'.

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

### **Absence:**

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

### **Authorised absence:**

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

### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

### **Persistent and Severe Absence:**

- Persistent absence: Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason
- Severe absence: Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **The governing board has overall responsibility for:**

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SMT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring the School follows the DfE Guidance for Children Missing Education and that procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

#### **The Head is responsible for:**

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SMT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

#### **Staff are responsible for:**

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

#### **The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:**

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.

#### **The attendance leads for each part of the School are responsible for:**

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Completing sickness return forms for students with 15 or more days of illness in one academic year
- Informing the LA of any pupil's name being deleted from the admission register unless exceptions apply.

#### **Parents are responsible for:**

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Supporting their children to be punctual.
- Communicating absence, and the reason for the absence, to the School before 8.20am on the day they are absent.

#### **Pupils are responsible for:**

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the school will use its professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list, however, indicates groups of pupils who are most at risk of missing education and the procedures the school will follow in response:

- **Pupils at risk of harm or neglect** – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children’s social care services (CSCS), and the police if appropriate. The Local Authority officers responsible for Children Missing Education will check whether a referral has been made, and will contact CSCS if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child’s safety is at risk, the Local Authority will contact the police.
- **Children of service personnel** – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.
- **Children who cease to attend school** – where the reason for a pupil who has stopped attending a school is not known, the Local Authority will investigate the situation.

#### **4. Attendance expectations**

Taunton School has high expectations for pupils’ attendance and punctuality, and we aspire to build a culture where all pupils can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. Through the culture of safeguarding, staff know that children missing education can be an indicator of safeguarding issues and therefore, they understand the importance of following up on all absences.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

#### **Taunton Pre-Preparatory School:**

The school day will start at **8:20am**, and pupils will be in their classrooms, ready for registration at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at **10:15am**, which will last until **10:35am**, and a lunch break at **12:00pm**, which will last until **1:15pm**.

- **The morning register will be marked by 8:30am.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will be marked as late. **The register will close at 9am.**
- **The afternoon register will be marked by 1:30pm. The register will close at 2.00pm.**

We 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.

#### **Taunton Preparatory School:**

The school day will start at **8:20am**, and pupils will be in their forms, ready for registration at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at **11:05am**, which will last until **11:25am**, and a lunch break at **12:30pm**, which will last until **1:40pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- **The morning register will be marked by 8:30am.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not in their form by this time. Pupils attending after this time will need to register at the Prep School Office. **The register will close at 9am.**
- **The afternoon register will be marked by 1:55pm.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not in their class by that time. **The register will close at 2.25pm.**
- **On a Wednesday, the pm register is taken at the start of P3 (11.30am) and closes at 12 noon. This is due to fixtures taking place each Wed afternoon for Y5-8. Pupils in Y3-4 are registered as normal during P4**

Class teachers will take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. We 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.

#### **Taunton Senior School**

The school day will start at **8:20am**, and pupils will be in their houses, ready for callover (registration) at this time. Pupils will have a morning break at **11:05am**, which will last until **11:25am**, and a lunch break at **12:30pm**, which will last until **1:35pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- **The morning register will be marked by 8:30am.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not in their house by this time. Pupils attending after this time will need to register at the Reception. **The register will close at 9am.**

- **The afternoon register will be marked by 1:35pm.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not in their house or seen by Reception by that time. **The register will close at 2.05pm.**

Class teachers will take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. We 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.

### Taunton School International

The school day will start at **8:20am**, and students will meet for registration in the TSI Hall (Foxcombe East) or Common Room (Foxcombe West)

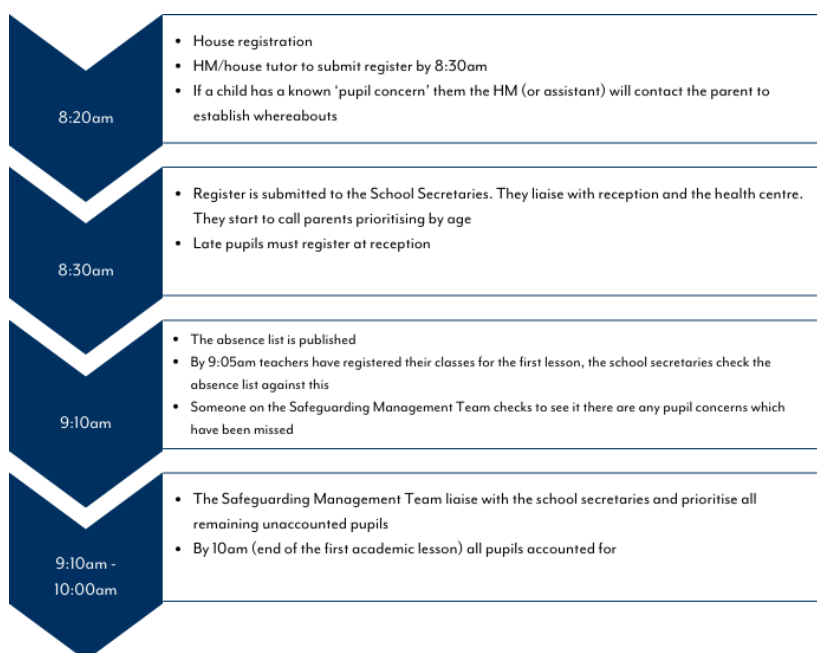
Pupils will have a morning break at 11:05am, which will last until 11:20am, and a lunch break at 12:20pm, which will last until 1:35pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

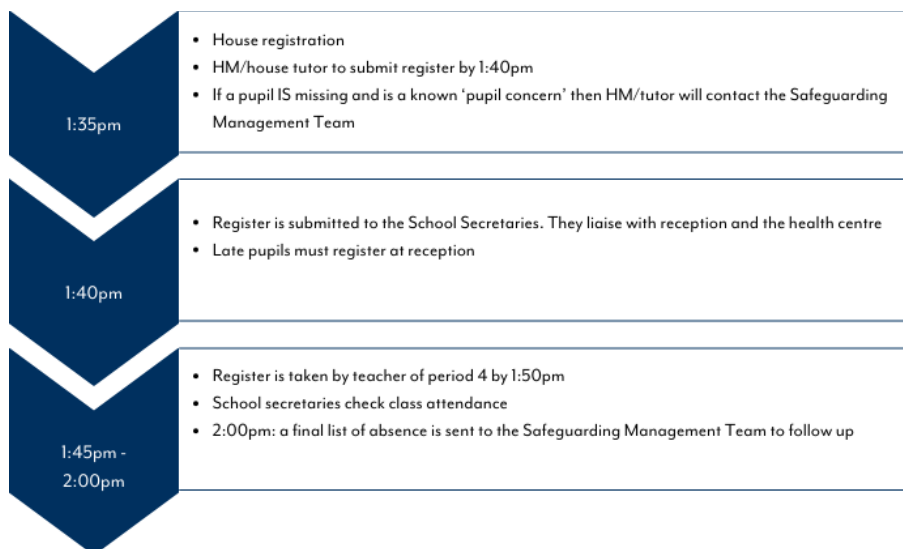
- **The morning register will be marked by 8:30am.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are present at registration. Pupils attending after this time will need to register at reception. **The register will close at 9am.**
- **The afternoon register will be marked by 1:35pm.** Pupils will be marked absent if they are not present at registration. **The register will close at 2.05pm.**

Class teachers will take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. We 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

### Morning registration:



## Afternoon registration



Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

## Nursery

While Nursery pupils are not yet of statutory school age, regular attendance is expected. Where a parent has booked in a child to attend nursery, staff will follow up on all absences.

The school uses a secure internet system to allow schools to transfer pupil information when a child moves to another education setting. This includes safeguarding concerns and attendance data.

If a pupil with a social worker is absent from school for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the school will inform the pupil's social worker.

## 5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the houseparent, tutor or key worker via email or telephone before 8:20am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, the School Office will contact the parent via telephone call by 09:30am on the first day, that the pupil does not attend school. If the school has reason to be concerned about the pupil, the houseparent will attempt to make contact at 08:30am.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent or severe absence, the relevant houseparent, tutor or key worker will discuss with the pupil and parents to understand barriers to attending school. This might include early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues. The school will inform the Local Authority when interventions are not effective and attendance remains below 90% with no sign of improvement.

Where a pupil is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register, if the school and the Local Authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

## **6. Attendance register**

The school uses ISAMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Houseparents or tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register (N), the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the school session.

## **7. Authorising parental absence requests**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Parents should write in a timely manner to the Head of each part of the school explaining what these circumstances are. The decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Head, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Head's decision is not subject to appeal.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Head will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If term-time leave is not granted, but parents proceed with the leave, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Leaves of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest during school hours.

In the Nursery, where pupils are not yet of statutory age, absences should be limited to the following circumstances:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Family bereavement
- External agency assessments
- Visa/passport appointments

## **8. SEND and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Mental Health Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Where the child or young person is able to undertake educational activities, work with parents to provide an agreed programme.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## 9. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must go to the Reception to sign out and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Safeguarding Team is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, the pupil will receive a Headmaster's Detention and a letter of will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider a report system. Failure to attend lessons and meet the expectations of the report will result in a meeting with the parents and pupil and either the Assistant/ Deputy Head Pastoral or the Head, to discuss the pupil's future at the school.

## 10. Persistent Absence (PA)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Looked After Children (and Previously Looked After Children)
- Young carers
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of Persistent Absence or Severe Absence, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence below 90 percent and where there are no signs of improvement and / or a lack of engagement from pupils and parents, they will work with the Local Authority and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **11. Monitoring and analysing absence**

The attendance data is sent to houseparents / tutors on a weekly basis to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. Houseparents are asked to discuss absence data with their tutor team in their weekly minuted tutor meetings and to discuss actions and interventions.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Houses
- Individual pupils
- Children with SEND

The houseparent / tutor will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it. Such analysis may include:

- Conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- Benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.

This will include identifying:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The houseparent / tutor will report weekly concerns to the pastoral lead in each part of the school and individual pupils will be discussed with the Safeguarding Team and the respective DDSLs for each part of the school. The Safeguarding Team will look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends.

## **12. Children Missing Education (CME)**

The School will proactively use data to address poor or irregular attendance in order to prevent children becoming CME. Where there are concerns about a child's safety or well-being, school staff should take immediate action by reporting their concerns to a member of the Safeguarding Team. Procedures are in place to promptly follow up on all unexpected and unexplained absences.

The school will follow the guidance on removing or adding pupils' names from or to the admission register. Where there are concerns about a CME, the school will play a role in conducting their own enquiries to locate the child, and the Safeguarding Team will liaise with the local authority to agree how to proceed.

### **13. Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher Safeguarding training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

### **14. UKVI Guidance**

Sponsored student attendance needs to be a minimum of 80%. If attendance falls below this figure, the school may be required to withdraw the visa. If attendance falls below 80% but the student is still engaging with the academic programme and/or there are legitimate reasons. If a student misses 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence, an assessment is made to determine if this should be reported to UKVI. Academic engagement and academic progress is continually monitored by the school. The school has a system of flagging sponsored student attendance before it reaches 80% so that interventions can be put in place.

### **Appendix A: Guidance on registration codes**

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (with the exception of a pupil who is a boarder). For further guidance and explanations of the absence codes, please refer to the 'attendance and absence codes' section of the [Working together to improve school attendance guidance](#).

Code	Meaning
<b>Attending the school</b>	
/\	Present at the school / = morning session / afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
<b>Attending a place other than school</b>	
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered at another school
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (this includes absence due to the non-payment of fees)
<b>Absent - unauthorised absence</b>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
<b>Administrative codes</b>	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure