



Old Park Primary School & Nursery

Whole school attendance policy

This policy is based on the 'working together to improve school attendance' document that was published by the DFE in August 2024.

Reviewed: Autumn 2024

Next Planned Review: Autumn 2025

Person responsible: J Foster

Whole-School Attendance Policy

Key contacts:

Strategic lead for attendance

James Foster (Headteacher)

Email: james.foster1@taw.org.uk

Parent/carer contact

Old Park primary main office

Email: oldparkprimary@telford.gov.uk

Phone: 01952 387250

School EWO

Helen Carolina

Email: Helen.Carolina@telford.gov.uk

Introduction:

The Old Park approach is one where we work in close collaboration with our families to support a culture of good attendance and safety. However, parents/carers are responsible by law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents/carers should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and should work closely with the staff at Old Park to overcome any potential barriers which may affect a child's attendance.

Our framework for a whole-school attendance policy is based on the 5 'Ps' - namely, Philosophy, Principles, Procedures, Performance and Practice.

1. Philosophy

Old Park Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance are identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school gives a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance and consistent punctuality.

National drive on attendance

Every state school in England, August 2024, will share their daily attendance registers across the education sector - including with the department for education, councils, and trusts in the next stage of the government's drive to reduce pupil absence in school. The sharing of daily school registers will form a new world-leading attendance data set that will help schools spot and support children displaying worrying trends of persistent absence or those in danger of becoming missing in education. Schools, trusts and councils will be able to access this data via an interactive secure data dashboard maintained by the department for education. This will allow them easy use of the data to not only spot pupils in need of support but also to understand how their attendance position compares locally and nationally so they can look at where they might need to drive improvements.

We will do this through the DfE platform WONDE. We will use available local and national figures to benchmark our attendance performance as well as to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.

2. Principles

The leadership team/governing body will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures.
- Send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally maintain and update information on the school website with any attendance related issues.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, they will be missed.
- Have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members, consider remote learning opportunities where necessary.
- Take responsibility for Children not Receiving Education (CNRE), so that school are in regular contact with the pupil and parent, ensuring the pupils safety, working together so that the pupil can resume full time education.
- Monitor and regularly review those pupils subject to a modified timetable, ensuring it is a short-term intervention and have a clear plan for reintegration back into full time attendance at school.

The class teachers will:

- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session.
- Using the correct codes (**appendix 1**) and submitting this information to the school office promptly after registration at 8:45am and the afternoon lunch.
- Celebrate and raise concerns around attendance data during parent interview weeks.

Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system using the correct codes (**appendix 1**) and inform class teachers of any messages when required.
- Transfer calls to the pupil welfare manager or member of the safeguarding team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents will:

- Make sure that their child arrives to school every day on time.
- Contact the school office to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Seek support/early help, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting our pupil welfare manager, safeguarding team or class teacher.

The school day (Foundation – Year 6)

- Classroom doors open at 8:40am
- Registers are taken at 8:55am
- The gates to the school will be locked at 8:55am, all pupils arriving after this time will need to enter the school via the main office. Parent's/carers will need to sign children into school advising why they have arrived late. Pupils will receive an L code (late code), late mark. Pupils who arrive from 9:30am will receive an unauthorised absence, U code.
- Registers are taken after lunch and if children are not in class for afternoon registration, they will be marked absent.
- The school day finishes at 3:15pm, unless children are attending clubs. Please inform the school office promptly if your child is being picked up by another adult at the end of the school day.
- If you are running late to pick up your child, please inform the school office. From 3:30pm children will need to be collected from the main office.

3. Procedures

Reporting absence

Attendance and safeguarding are intrinsically linked. All members of the team have a duty of care to ensure that we follow our attendance and child protection policies daily.

Our expectation is for parents/carers to contact the school office by 9:00am if their child is absent. Please expect to be asked for the specific reason for the absence e.g. flu. This will ensure that our registration code is accurate. Parents and carers must contact the school office rather than speaking to class teachers or messages from siblings.

If you have reported your child's absence, please stay in regular communication with the school. You may receive follow-up phone calls during the week to check in on your child's progress. This is done on a case-by-case basis. We have the responsibility to contact parents to investigate reasons for absence, including completing home visits where contact cannot be made by telephone. If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will follow our first day calling procedure.

Stage 1: Registration

Registration will be carried out at the beginning of the morning and afternoon, with registers closing at 8:55am and 1:35pm. The school uses BROMCOM management information systems (MIS) to record attendance. This allows us to have an accessible, accurate and easy to use record of the data and information relating to the individual pupil, or whole school attendance in the form of data reports.

Stage 2: First day contact

Old Park has a detailed understanding of their pupils and families, and using this knowledge is critical to make sure pupils attend and are safe. We use this information to create a tiered response system to prioritise first day contact by our office staff.

The **green** process is as follows:

- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will follow the 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent/carer by telephone.
- The expectation is that all phone calls are made and logged on BROMCOM by 10:30am.
- Details of the communication will be logged on BROMCOM and if appropriate CPOMS.

The **amber** process is as follows:

- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will follow the 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent/carer by telephone.
- The expectation is that all phone calls are made by 10:00am
- Details of the communication will be logged on BROMCOM and if appropriate CPOMS.

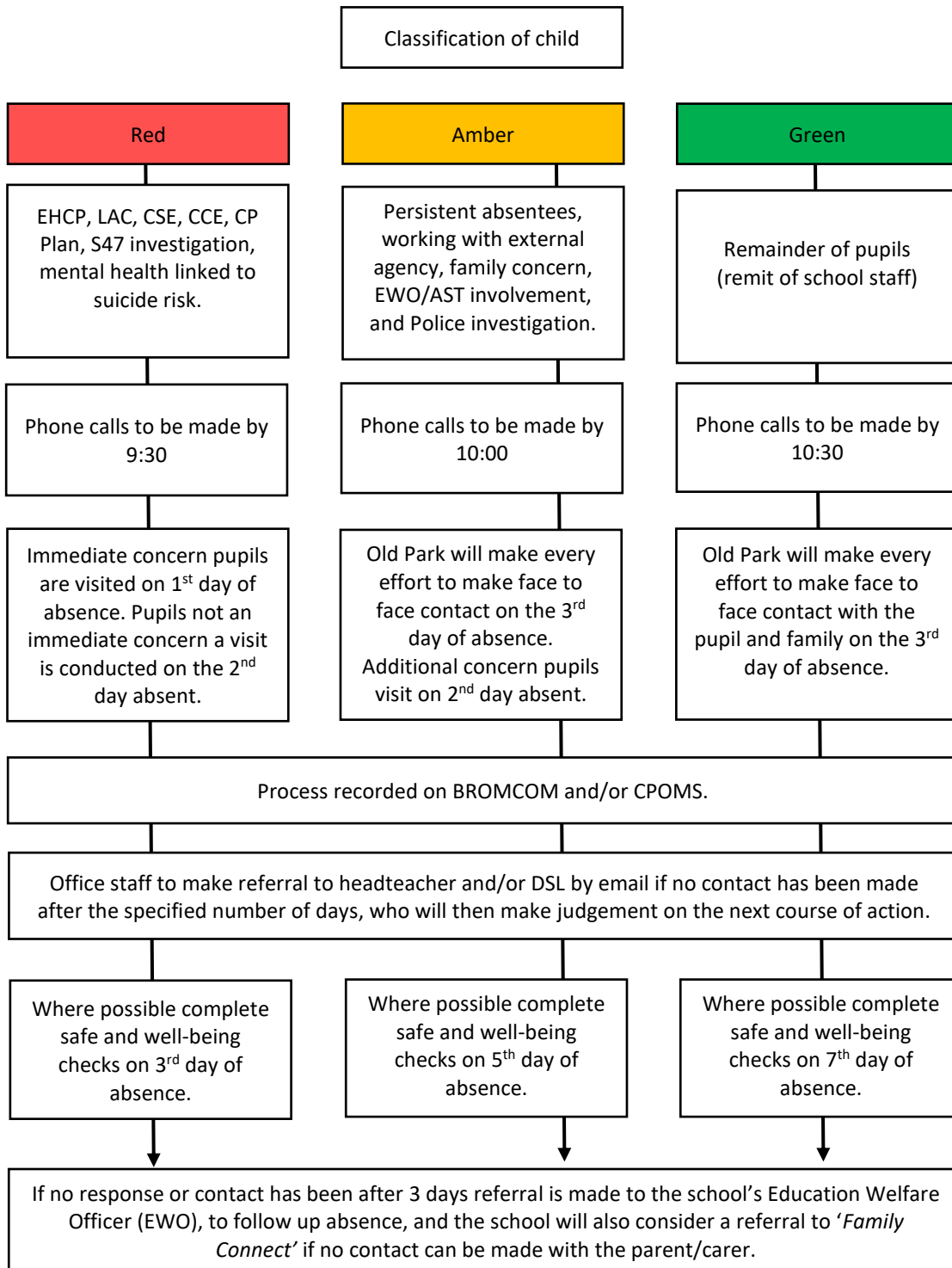
The **red** process is as follows:

- If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will follow the 'first day contact' procedures and contact the parent/carer by telephone.
- The expectation is that phone calls are made by 09:30.
- Details of the communication will be logged on BROMCOM and if appropriate CPOMS.
- Details of the absence are then sent to the headteacher/DSL by 10:30 if not contact is made who will then decide on the next course of action.

Pupil categorisation system

Pupil category	Definition/criteria	Additional school attendance action
Red	EHCP, LAC, CSE, CCE, CP Plan, S47 investigation, mental health linked to suicide risk.	<p>In addition to the first day contact</p> <p>Old Park will make every effort to make face to face contact with the pupil and family on the 2nd day of absence.</p> <p>Old Park will contact, and update linked external agencies.</p> <p>Old Park will visit pupils/families on the 1st day of absence if they have additional concerns.</p>
Amber	Persistent absentees, working with external agency, family concern, EWO/AST involvement, and Police investigation.	<p>In addition to the first day contact</p> <p>Old Park will make every effort to make face to face contact with the pupil and family on the 3rd day of absence. Pupils with additional concerns will be made on the 2nd day of absence.</p> <p>Old Park will contact, and update linked external agencies.</p> <p>Old Park will visit pupils/families on a more regular basis if they have additional concerns.</p>
Green	Remainder of pupils (remit of school staff)	<p>In addition to the first day contact</p> <p>Old Park will make every effort to make face to face contact with the pupil and family on the 3rd day of absence (or letter/email will be sent if no face-to-face contact)</p> <p>Old Park will visit pupils/families on a more regular basis if they have additional concerns.</p>

Old Park first day calling procedure.



Stage 3: School support

- Invite the parents into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent/carer, pupil (where appropriate) and the EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.
- Support the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then a 'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupils needs as possible.
- Provide Early Help advice and support to the family, undertaking an Early Help Assessment if appropriate and make a referral to Strengthening Families if it is felt the family would benefit from additional support.
- In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Children Missing in Education

In accordance with the DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidelines 2016: schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the Local Authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register after making 'reasonable enquiries', to establish the whereabouts of

Home visits will also take place if a satisfactory reason for absence is not provided, or unusual patterns are noticed. We have duty of care to safeguard all children; this is one of the requirements within our child protection policy.

In order to ensure the success of this policy, every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

4. Performance

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be set during the autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the Governing Body. The Governing Body must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year and will be recorded in the governing body minutes. Ideally, the target should be sent to the Attendance Support Team by the end of the autumn term at the latest. In compiling an 'Action Plan', the school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

Attendance targets

How is your child's attendance? Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.			
	0 days off school	100%	Perfect attendance – well done!
	Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
	Equates to 5 days off school each year	95% - 98%	Good
	Equates to 10 days off school each year	90% - 94%	Slight concern
	Equates to 20 days off school each year. <i>The Government class attendance below 90% as Persistent Absence.</i>	86% - 89%	Concern
	Equates to 30 days off school each year	85% or below	Significant concern

When evaluating success, the school will consider the impact of the work on school attendance by whether or not:

- Attendance has improved.
- Persistent absence has reduced.
- Punctuality has improved.
- Parental response to absences has improved.
- Re-integration plans, where implemented, have been successful.
- There are specific key groups where a target approach is appropriate to raise attendance, e.g. children in receipt of pupil premium.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community.
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school.
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, personal development lessons, newsletters or as a theme for any other lessons.

5. Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately.
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers.
- Regularly analysing attendance data & comparing it against both the local and national average and considering the performance of key groups in comparison to the national data for that particular group.
- Rewarding children and classes for good attendance.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance.
- Liaising closely with the school's EWO, if appropriate.
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages/email or contact from parents/carers.
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents/carers is retained by the school.
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention using the electronic ASTR form.

Appointments

Parents are encouraged to book medical and dental appointments **outside** of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office.

If the appointment is during the day, the pupils are expected to attend school before and after the appointment where possible.

Religious Observance

The school will take advice from the attendance team within Telford & Wrekin Council to establish the appropriate number of days absence required for religious festivals. Parent/Carer will be required to complete a request for absence during term time form.

Request for absence during term time

The DfE guidance about holiday in term time makes the following points:

- Each request can only be judged on a case-by-case basis
- Even in exceptional circumstances, it is expected that Headteachers will use their discretion sparingly.
- Headteachers should not apply policies (for example, blanket bans) which might suggest that each application has not been considered on its individual merits

As a general guide any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13 weeks holiday time should not be authorised during the school term. School will confirm in writing our decision whether to authorise any leave in term time or not following any requests for leave in term time. This provides parents/carers with written information about the possible consequences of taking leave that has not been authorised.

Exceptional Leave – Term Time Leave of Absence

Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from the school office. These are also available on the school website. DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence.

In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of Old Park Primary School and Nursery support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered individually and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

Please see **appendix 2** for the form to be completed and handed into the school office.

Penalty Notice Framework

In line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10-week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed below.

From August 19th, 2024, the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'.

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 which must be paid within 28 days.
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.

In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – however, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

Early Help

We encourage our families to communicate any issues, worries or changes in family circumstance with us, so we can help support them quickly and appropriately. **Early Help** means providing support as soon as an issue emerges, at any point in a child's life. Through Old Park's early help offer, there are a variety of ways we can do this.

The diagram below shows the range of needs at different levels. We use this graduated approach to make sure we provide the best support for different families' individual situations.



For more information about 'Early Help', please visit our school website: [Old Park Primary and Nursery - Our Early Help Offer](#)

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
----------	-----------------------------------	--

N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Form for parental requests for leave in term time

Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave in term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send the request form below to the Headteacher. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **before** the desired period of absence. (Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any planned absence before receiving the school's decision regarding their request). In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the leave in term time requested dates to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) Guidance '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb 2024)*' states that: *Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.* Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy supports that view. Where such requests are made, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances** before the leave is granted, if the leave is granted the Headteacher has the discretion to agree the duration of that leave.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents therefore, need to consider very carefully before making any request for leave in term time, the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school may also take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
 - whether the child is compulsory school age;
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
 - whether the same trip could be taken during the 13 weeks school is closed to pupils?
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents have children in more than one school, a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, there is an expectation that all schools involved will communicate and all agree a decision whether to authorise or not. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any leave requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave in term time are received from only one parent the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all parents are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent may receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant the leave. but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave in term time period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**
7. Should the School decide **not to grant the leave** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 per parent per child. This Penalty Notice fine will be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days. Failure to pay the £160 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings, which could ultimately result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or imprisonment of up to three months.

Request for Leave during Term Time

Date.....

To: The Headteacher of:.....(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name)

from (date) to (date) for school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) and (parent/carer).....

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s)) School(s)

.....

.....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) **Signed**

Current address.....

Mobile No:.....

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of unauthorised absence sessions during previous 10 school weeks

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed?

What action are other schools taking?

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Job Title.....

Print Name Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent

Any notes:

