

Absence and Attendance Codes

Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities

department for
children, schools and families

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INTRODUCTION

This guidance note provides assistance to schools (including independent schools and Academies) and LAs in the use of codes to record pupil attendance and absence in schools. It relates to attendance at statutory morning and afternoon registration sessions and replaces the guidance issued in February 2005.

Schools are required to be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year or 380 sessions by the [Education \(School Day and School Year\) Regulations 1999](#).

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

The guidance should be used in conjunction with the [Education \(Pupil Registration\)\(England\) Regulations 2006](#), which are available at www.statutelaw.gov.uk. References to “relevant regulation” in the guidance on the individual codes are to these regulations and references to “legal meaning” are the meaning of the code under regulation 6(1)(a).

The [Department for Children, Schools and Families](#) (DCSF) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DCSF without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

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

Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into effect on 1 September 2006.

The 2006 regulations (Regulation 15) permit schools to use electronic registers and had two changes from the 1995 regulations. The first was to allow schools to take electronic back-up or micro-fiche copies of registers rather than print outs. The second is to ensure that those inspecting registers are given access to the

electronic registers and additional back-up copies.

However, because there has not been sufficient time to allow the requirements of Regulation 15(4) to be fully implemented in software used in schools to record attendances and absences from September 2006, schools are advised to make a printed copy of the attendance register each month (Reg 15(2)) and to annotate that printed copy so that every amendment made to the attendance register that month includes —

- (a) the original entry;
- (b) the amended entry;
- (c) the reason for the amendment;
- (d) the date on which the amendment was made; and
- (e) the name or title of the person who made the amendment.

This annotated print out would then be available for inspection and for use in irregular attendance cases brought before the Courts. It will help schools and their staff remember and explain why a change was made to either the admissions or the attendance registers, particularly if there has been a significant passage of time.

Further Guidance

Further guidance on all issues to do with school attendance can be found on the school attendance website at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/>

Contact can be made with the DCSF School Attendance Team at school.attendance@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

Use of Fonts in Software

Developers of attendance systems, which incorporate these attendance codes, need to be aware of the impact of using standard fonts such as Arial when displaying absence codes in screen and paper outputs from attendance systems.

A week's attendance data for a pupil with two morning illnesses (using the Code I for the illness) could appear as follows when output in Arial

- MIMM

However, a font type such as Courier New would show the same pattern as

- /\I\I\I\

A font such as Courier New produces a much clearer display of codes for use in discussion with pupils, parents and in the Courts.

Acknowledgement

Thanks are due to Southampton LA for the layout and format of this document.

REGISTRATION CODE: /\

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

Additional useful information:

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

Advice on using the Absence and Attendance Codes

- DCSF advises schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the register was taken. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)
- Under the School Day and School Year regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in internal exclusions units or shared exclusions units. However they must have regard to the Department's advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the regulatory requirement to offer 380 sessions to all pupils.
- Where schools set different session times, they should close the register 30 minutes after the register was taken for that group of pupils. For example if the main school day started at 8.30am but the internal exclusion unit (or shared exclusion unit) started at 9.30am:
 - the register for the main school should close at 9.00am; and
 - the register for the exclusion unit will close at 10.00am.(See Code L and Code U)
- **For safeguarding and educational reasons, schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, such as through "First Day Calling" procedures.**

REGISTRATION CODE: B

Brief Description	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	Where a registered pupil on roll is currently being educated off-site at a supervised activity approved by the school.
Relevant Regulation	6 (4)

Additional useful information:

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

Examples of when this code would be used are:

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

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

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

This code must not be used when pupils are attending alternative provision on the school's premises.

Schools should not use this code if a pupil has an agreed part-time timetable as part of reintegration or transition. The school are authorising the absence for the sessions that the pupil is not required to be in school and the pupil should be recorded as Code C for those sessions. Whilst part-time timetables are a useful

technique to help pupils adapt or re-adapt to the school setting, they have the effect of reducing the sessions on offer to those pupils to under the minimum 380 sessions. Such timetables should be a short term measure.

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: C

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

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

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

Public Performances

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

Young Carers

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

Birth of a Child

- Support should be directed to keeping the pupil in school wherever possible, and to return her to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth.
- A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.
- Further guidance is available in DfES Circular 0629/2001 at the following site <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolageparents/>

Advice on using the Absence and Attendance Codes

At the request of the school

A pupil has been placed on an agreed part-time timetable e.g. as part of a staggered intake or reintegration package or academic review days where pupils only attend for the duration of their interview.

REGISTRATION CODE: D

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

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: E

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

Additional useful information:

This code is used to record pupils' absence because:

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

It must **not** be used to record the fact that the pupil has been excluded.

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

If the alternative provision made is attendance at a PRU or a shared exclusion unit at another school, the pupil should be recorded under Code D as the pupil is dually registered at both institutions. In these circumstances, the pupil's status as recorded in the school MIS system changes from Current single registration (C) to Current main (Dual registration) (M).

If the pupil is "internally excluded" or is attending a shared exclusion unit within the school then the attendance should be recorded using the normal marks for present.

Advice on using the Absence and Attendance Codes

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

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

* Guidance on LA “approval of alternative providers” is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk.

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: F

Brief Description	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time. They must apply for leave in advance of taking it. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. Schools should invite parents to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.</p> <p>Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Pupils who fail to return to school within 10 days of the end of extended leave of absence may be deleted if both the school and LA fail to locate them and they do not have good reason to be absent.</p>
Relevant Regulation	7 and 8(f)

Additional useful information:

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

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday (whether authorised or not) in an academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance. A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual DCSF absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%**. This latter is the figure that appears in the performance and attainment tables.

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

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

Advice on using the Absence and Attendance Codes

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

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

Examples include:

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

REGISTRATION CODE: G

Brief Description	Family Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time and must apply for the leave in advance of taking it. Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. Schools should invite parents in to school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.</p> <p>Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.</p>
Relevant regulation	7

Additional useful information:

A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during one whole academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance

A pupil who takes 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual DCSF absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%**. This is the figure that appears in the performance tables.

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: H

Brief Description	Family Holiday (agreed)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time and parents must apply for the leave in advance of taking it . Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress; and whether circumstances warrant it. Schools should invite parents to discuss any proposed holiday in term time. Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances which warrant it. They can only agree to absence of more than 10 school days in a school year if they believe there are exceptional circumstances.
Relevant Regulation	7

Additional useful information:

A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during one whole academic year will only attain **94.7%** attendance. A pupil who is authorised to take 10 days holiday during the period of September – May (the annual DfES absence survey time period) will only attain **93.8%**. The latter is the figure that appears in the performance and attainment tables.

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: I

Brief Description	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	<p>Missing registration through illness is an authorised absence. If a pupil is present for registration but returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session. Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.</p> <p>If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can record the absence as unauthorised absence (Code O) but should advise parents of the school's intention. Schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support absence on the grounds of illness.</p> <p>A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.</p>
Relevant Regulation	6(2)

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: J

Brief Description	Interview
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	Interviews with prospective employers, or another educational establishment.
Relevant Regulation	6(4)

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: L

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

Additional useful information:

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

DCSF advises that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the register was taken. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)

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

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

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

(See also Code U)

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

REGISTRATION CODE: M

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

Additional useful information:

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

Medical appointments include:

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

REGISTRATION CODE: N

Brief Description	No reason yet provided for absence
Statistical Meaning	Unauthorised Absence
Legal Meaning	Absent
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	No reason for absence
Relevant Regulation	6(3)

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: O

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

Additional useful information:

Examples:

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

REGISTRATION CODE: P

Brief Description	Approved sporting activity
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	The pupil is participating in or attending an approved sporting activity.
Relevant Regulation	6(4)

Additional useful information:

The activity must be supervised by a person authorised in that behalf by the Headteacher of the school.

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: R

Brief Description	Religious observance
Statistical Meaning	Authorised Absence
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
Legal Meaning	Absent
DCSF Definition	Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.
Relevant Regulation	6(2)(b)

Additional useful information:

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: S

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

Additional useful information:

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

The Specialist Schools Trust have produced a booklet 'Beyond Study Leave' written by head teachers and endorsed by SHA and NAHT which provides practice examples of alternatives to study leave. This can be found at:

<http://www.specialistschools.org.uk/publications/default.aspx?q=beyond%20study%20leave&f=1&s=1&c=publications>

In addition the DCSF has produced a GCSE Booster Pack DFES reference 0678- 2004 which provides materials for teachers and students to help them perform as well as they can in GCSE examinations. It is available on:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=leadership&ProductId=DfES+0678-2004>

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: T

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

Additional useful information:

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller - Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (Fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

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

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

If the pupil is known to be dual registered and present at another school during the session in question, the attendance should be recorded using code D.

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: U

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

Additional useful information:

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

Example:

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

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

DCSF advises schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the register was taken. It also advises schools against leaving the register open for the whole session. (See Code L and Code U)

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

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

Under the School Day and School Year regulations, schools can set different session times for different pupils such as during public examinations and setting different lesson times for pupils in exclusions units. However they must have

regard to the Department's advice on the minimum taught time for pupils and the requirement to offer 380 sessions.

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

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

(See also Code L)

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

REGISTRATION CODE: V

Brief Description	Educational visit or trip
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	School organised trips and visits, including residential trips. Can also be used for other trips of a strictly educational nature, which are arranged by other organisations, provided they are supervised.
Relevant Regulation	6(4)

Additional useful information:

Further information on running visits is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/library/schoolvisits/

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

REGISTRATION CODE: W

Brief Description	Work experience
Statistical Meaning	Approved Educational Activity
Legal Meaning	Attending approved educational activity
Physical Meaning	Out for whole session
DCSF Definition	Work experience under section 560 of the Education Act 1996. Schools must ensure that they check on the attendance of the pupil at the work experience placement and mark the register accordingly.
Relevant regulation	6(4)

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: X

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

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

If a pupil is registered at more than one school, attendance at other school(s) should be recorded under code D with absence from them all recorded in the normal way. Year 11 Pupils who are going onto the Year 12 (Sixth Form)

Under the 2006 Pupil Registration regulations, schools cannot delete Year 11 pupils who intend to remain at the school and enter the Sixth Form (Year 12) from the school registers. Once the pupils have reached the end of their compulsory school-age, which is on the last Friday in June, they can be recorded using this code if the school has not asked them to attend.

REGISTRATION CODE: Y

Brief Description	Forced and Partial Closure
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or not attending because the pupils have a different school year to other pupils in the school.
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
DCSF Definition	Where the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause or the transport provided by the school or local authority for pupils (who do not live with walking distance) is not available. Or where the school has different term dates for different groups of pupils.
Relevant Regulation	6(5)

Additional useful information:

[Different Term Dates for Different Pupils](#)

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

Closed due to unavoidable cause

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

Examples include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION CODE: Z

Brief Description	Pupil not on roll
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	Pupil not registered at the school
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
DCSF Definition	None
Relevant Regulation	5(3)

Additional useful information:

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

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

Under the 2006 Regulations (Regulation 5), schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend **not**, as previously, when they first attend. Schools should also remember that all pupils on the admissions register must also be entered on the attendance register and their attendance recorded.

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

REGISTRATION CODE:

Brief Description	School closed to pupils
Statistical Meaning	Not counted in possible attendances
Legal Meaning	No session held
Physical Meaning	Not required to be in school
DCSF Definition	None

Additional useful information:

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

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

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

Children Missing Education for Medical Reasons

Purpose

1. This advice is aimed at those in schools, local authorities and the health sector supporting children who have temporary or long term medical conditions and to sign post them to more detailed information and advice. Additional guidance for schools handling cases whether the authenticity of an illness or the necessity for any absence is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance.

Maintaining a pupil's education

2. All pupils should continue to have access to education when they are ill or are unable to attend school for other medical reasons. The nature and amount of educational activity that they do must always be dictated by their medical condition. But it should be balanced with the need to help them keep up with their studies and maintain the momentum of their education.

3. Schools, local authorities, health professionals and other agencies should work together to support a child who cannot go to school for health reasons. Clearly, the need to manage the condition and recovery are a priority but everyone should also aim to maintain the child's education. Two pieces of legislation support this process by empowering schools and local authorities to make suitable arrangements are the:

- 2002 Education Act which gives governing bodies of maintained schools the power to direct pupils at the school to attend alternative provision; and
- 1996 Education Act which places a duty on LAs to make arrangements for children who are unable to attend school to continue their education unless arrangements have been made.

4. There are a variety of ways of maintaining these children's education, including hospital schools, hospital teaching services, home teaching and pupil referral units. These are referred to as Alternative Provision and are covered by the Department's guidance, which is available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/a/alternativeprovision. However, it is important that there is good liaison between all the agencies, including the school and the provider in order to ensure that the child's needs are met and avoid duplication of work.

The Attendance Register

5. A registered pupil who does not go to school but attends alternative provision during a session should be marked in the school attendance register as "approved educational activity" for that session using the appropriate code. A registered pupil who does not go to school for medical reasons and does not

Children Missing Education for Medical Reasons

receive education through other alternative provision, in line with the “Access Guidance”, during a session should be marked as authorised absence. Further information is available in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (www.statutelaw.gov.uk) and in the guidance about the regulations and the codes at www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/legislation.

6. Schools and LAs should note that the termly absence returns through the School Census treat approved educational attendance as “present” when calculating absence rates. The effect of this is that every session that a pupil attends alternative provision reduces a school’s overall absence rate.

The Admissions Register

7. Schools should not normally delete a pupil from either the admissions register or the attendance register because the child has been absent for medical reasons. The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (www.statutelaw.gov.uk) require certification from a school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be well enough to return before ceasing to be of compulsory school age before a school can do so. The regulations prevent schools from deleting dual registered pupils from either register school unless they both agree.

Further Information

8. In collaboration with the Department for Health, the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) issued a statutory guidance in 2001 called “Access to Education for children and young people with Medical needs” which covers:

- access to education;
- clear policies, procedures, standards and responsibilities;
- early identification and intervention;
- continuity of educational provision;
- working together;
- successful reintegration into school;
- partnership with parents and pupils;
- high quality educational provision; and
- accountability.

Children Missing Education for Medical Reasons

A copy of the guidance is available at www.dcsf.gov.uk/sickchildren and

additional advice about teenage pregnancy issues is available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/teenagepregnancy.

9. Further information is available on the following websites:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance

www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance

www.teachernet.gov.uk

www.inclusion.ngfl.gov.uk

www.dcsf.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolageparents.