



Marshland
HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	Governing Body
Approved:	September 2025
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Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy when their children join our school and provide regular reminders and updates thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

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1. Introduction

At Marshland High School we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a [wide range of evidence](#) as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents/carers

decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind, with a focus on the "Support First" approach, and underpins our school ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents and carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

At Marshland High School we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Champion	Mrs Swinburn	S.Swinburn@marshlandhigh.co.uk
Attendance Officer	Mrs Byrne	attendance@marshlandhigh.co.uk
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance	Mr S Cozens	s.cozens@marshlandhigh.co.uk

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents/carers, pupils, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and form group achievements.
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Marshland High School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents/carers so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.

- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Leadership Team (including senior attendance champion) at Marshland High School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors/Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor/trustee for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.

- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Marshland High School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

Specific staff responsible for attendance (Attendance Officer / Pastoral Managers) will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. These staff will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing individual, year group, cohort and whole school pupil attendance data, including benchmarking the data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and to identify and address patterns of absence.
- Undertaking weekly attendance meetings with the Senior Attendance Champion, Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, and other relevant staff members.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern, including Early Intervention plans, the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents/carers.

- Taking an active lead in delivering whole school initiatives such as awards assemblies and reward schemes.
- Working collaboratively with local schools' attendance teams, where there are siblings, to support the whole family.
- Reporting to and liaising closely with the Local Authority Schools Attendance Support Team where absence intensifies, for example to put formal support in place, issue an Informal Notice to improve, intensify multi-agency support or to consider legal interventions.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Marshland High School expects that parents/carers:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Marshland High School will support all **pupils** to ensure that they:

- Are aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents/carers and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons, ready to learn, with the appropriate learning equipment requested and on time for their lesson.
- Follow the school's procedures if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for safeguarding each child, as well as health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'. Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

"Absence" as:

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

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as:

- 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 or unavoidable cause (as authorised in advance by the school)

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as (but not limited to):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have not been properly explained;
- Arrival at school after the register has closed;
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, etc;
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes;
- Leaving school for no reason during the day;
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.1 Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' (**PA**) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**' (**SA**). Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents/carers fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents/carers found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

3.2 Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Marshland High School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Marshland High School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least 10 school days before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Marshland High School will treat each application individually and may, depending on the circumstances of the application, discuss this in person before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents/carers will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or

made with the parents/carers, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

3.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents/carers should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parents/carers notify the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, we ask, wherever possible that evidence of the medical appointment is provided and pupils must be collected from school. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental presence during school hours.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents/carers to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the school has reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 days of school (consecutively or cumulatively) because of sickness, we are legally required to provide the local authority with the full name and address of the pupil. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on [arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#).

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents/carers to attend a school-led Attendance Support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents/carers and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.¹

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents/carers to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) and Norfolk County Council policies via the [Medical Needs Service](#). We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Marshland High School will be mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental health needs and provide them with additional support. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about

¹ This is in accordance with the NSCP [Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited](#)

friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly – in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in the future. It is important in these instances that the child and/or parents/carers report their concerns to an appropriate school staff member (Pastoral Manager, attendance officer, form tutor) as soon as possible, so that support can be put in place as soon as possible.

3.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Marshland High School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school.

3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child² and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Marshland High School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Marshland High School in the last 18 months. Parents/carers can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Marshland High School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents/carers:

² A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4. Our Procedures

Teaching staff should complete the morning register at 8:50am and the afternoon register at 12:30pm. The register will be recorded electronically using our MIS system, Bromcom.

4.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Expected absence procedure for parents/carers:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents/carers are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:15am when our register closes.
- Contact should be via the attendance officer from 7.15 on 01945 586314 before 8.15am.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:15am
- Ensure that their child returns to school as soon as possible.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:15am and where no reason for absence is known. We will telephone, email or text parents/carers on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from them. However, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to contact parents/carers by telephone, text or email, we will telephone emergency contact numbers and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements.

4.3 Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, as well as risk missing vital work and important messages from their form tutor.

At Marshland High School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at **8:50am**. We advise all parents/carers to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at **8:50am**. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign in at reception and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is before **9:15am** it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at **9:15am**. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with one of our staff, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time please speak to your child's pastoral manager.

We expect parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will also be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

4.3a Late Arrival to Lessons

At Marshland High School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every lesson of the day. A register for every lesson will be taken within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. Any pupil who arrives late will be recorded as an L code for that lesson. For repeated lates to school or lessons students will be issued a lunch time detention, we will also ask parents/carers to meet pastoral managers to discuss and support attendance.

4.3b Absence from Lessons (Internal Truancy)

It is both an attendance and a safeguarding concern, when a pupil attends school and stays on site during school hours, but avoids attending certain lesson(s). At Marshland High School we recognise that there can be a number of reasons but this behaviour; however, if we can't see them, we cannot confirm that they are safe and the pupil is missing out on vital learning. A register for every lesson will be taken within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. Any pupil who has not arrived at the start of a lesson but our MIS (Bromcom) indicates that they have been present in school earlier in the day. Truancy from lessons will result in an afterschool detention.

4.4 Support Systems

At Marshland High School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Various reward systems to support and/or acknowledge improved attendance;
- Write to parents/carers if their child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Attendance Officer;
- Completing wishes and feelings work with the child to understand their views on why they are absent from school;
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of the child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate, or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with parents/carers;
- Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support, or consult with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns;
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint interventions to be made or to discuss alternative support available based on individual circumstances;
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).

- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents/carers and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupils.

4.5 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

Absence is tracked on Bromcom daily and summarised, discussed at meetings and reported to governors which will include a breakdown of groups – attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs, medical needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. Reports will also consider recent and historic trends at school level, as well as benchmarking to comparator schools within the Trust, Local Authority area and nationwide.

A letter advising parents and carers of their legal responsibilities and of penalty notices is sent out yearly and published on the school website 'Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents/carers' (Appendix A).

The attendance target for all pupils is 97%

The school promotes good attendance through

- Write to you if your child's attendance is causing a concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion, Attendance Officer or a Pastoral Manager.
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate or undertake an Early Help Assessment & Plan with you;
- Refer the matter to an external agency for multi-agency support, or consult with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate).
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Where attendance is below 97% but above 90%, the school may do any one or combination of the following:

- Personalised text sent to parents/carers highlighting number of days child has missed during the current school year

- Letters sent home highlighting concerns about attendance and/or punctuality
- Wishes and feelings work completed with the child to understand their views on why they are absent from school
- Ask parents/carers to attend a meeting at school with the attendance officer / pastoral manager / senior member of staff to discuss barriers to attendance.

At Marshland High School we will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

4.6 Part-time Timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

In line with Norfolk County Council [guidance](#), we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

5. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/carers may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do

not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents/carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

6. Deletions from the Register

At Marshland High School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Marshland High School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We will inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register, under any circumstances.

We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Marshland High School will follow Norfolk County Council's [Children Missing Education procedures](#) when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

7. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance, DfE \(August 2024\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE \(December 2023\)](#)
- [Children missing education, DfE \(September 2016\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education, DfE \(September 2025\)](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, DfE \(Updated 2025\)](#)

9. Appendices.

Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for Parents/Carers

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Marshland High School our aim is to collaborate with parents/carers to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents/carers about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The important legal information – effective September 2025

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents/carers have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance.**

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact your child's Pastoral Manager or the School Attendance Officer.

Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request Form

Request to authorise student absence from Marshland High School due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional.

Please note: The Department for Education 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'. There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Please note the government has updated its statutory guidance on attendance, applicable 19th August 2024 – ***Working Together to Improve School Attendance***

If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are strongly advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – Children for whom an Authorised Absence is sort

To the headteacher, I wish to apply for:			
Child's Full Name		Year Group	Current Attendance Rate
to be authorised from school on the following date(s) and time(s):			
From (date and time)		Until (date and time)	

Section B – Parent(s) /Carer(s) Details

First Name		Surname			
Date of Birth		Relationship to the child			
Address and postcode					
Telephone Number					
First Name		Surname			
Date of Birth		Relationship to the child			
Address and postcode					
Telephone Number					
Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings not at Marshland and the school that they attend					
Child's Full Name		Date of Birth		School	

Section C – Reason for Authorised Absence (including supporting evidence)

Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the circumstances which make your application exceptional; meaning the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please continue on additional paper (please attach any additional sheets).

Section D

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent(s)/care(s), per child.

I have read and understood Norfolk County Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take. I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

PLEASE NOTE: This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non-attendance being issued

Signed		Full Name		Date	
Signed		Full Name		Date	

Section E: For School Use Only

Date request received by school		Total number of days /sessions requested	
Child's Name	Application Authorised or Declined		
Reason for school decision			
In the case of a term time holiday, please confirm which parent took the holiday			
Headteacher	Craig Jansen		
Signed		Date	

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents/Carers

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name: Mrs S Byrne, Attendance Officer

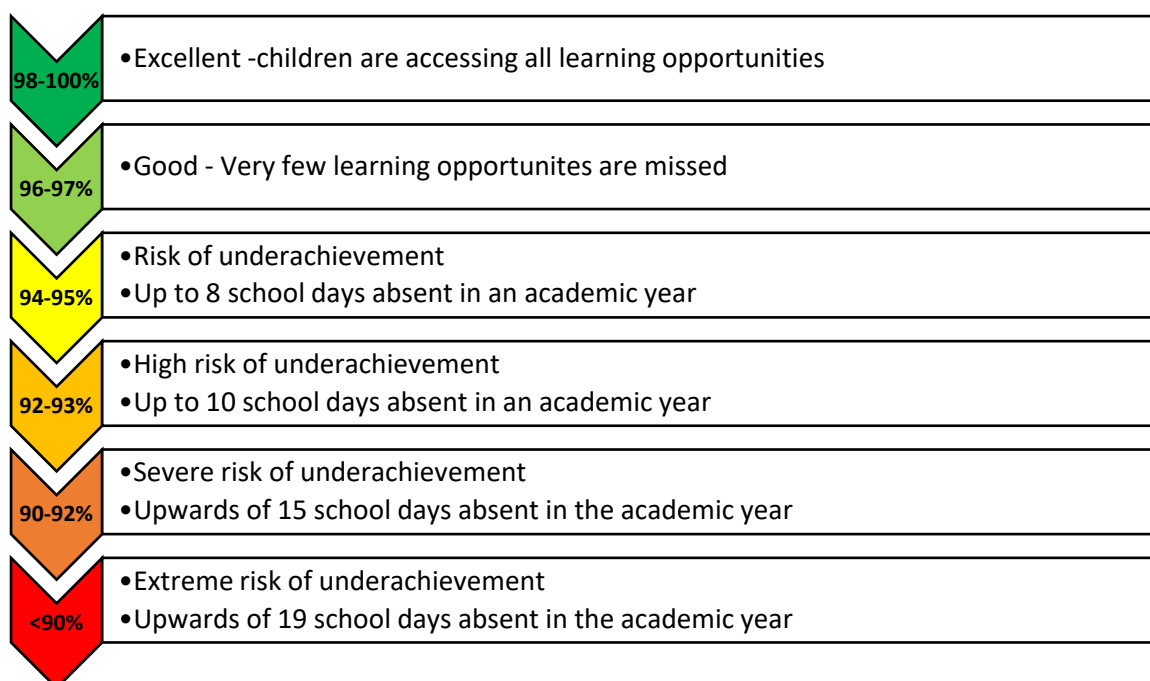
Email: attendance@marshlandhigh.co.uk

Telephone number: 01905 586314

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **8.40 am**.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



‘On the day’ absences: what should I do if my child is not ‘fit’ to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence using the absense number: 01905 586314 to let us know. In the message you must leave your child’s full name, year and tutor group and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our ‘Leave of absence request’ form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via Marshland High School. You will receive a letter in response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in school by 8.40.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact our Attendance Officer if you require any support with ensuring your child’s regular school attendance.

Appendix 4: Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

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

Monitor

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

Listen and understand

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

Facilitate support

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

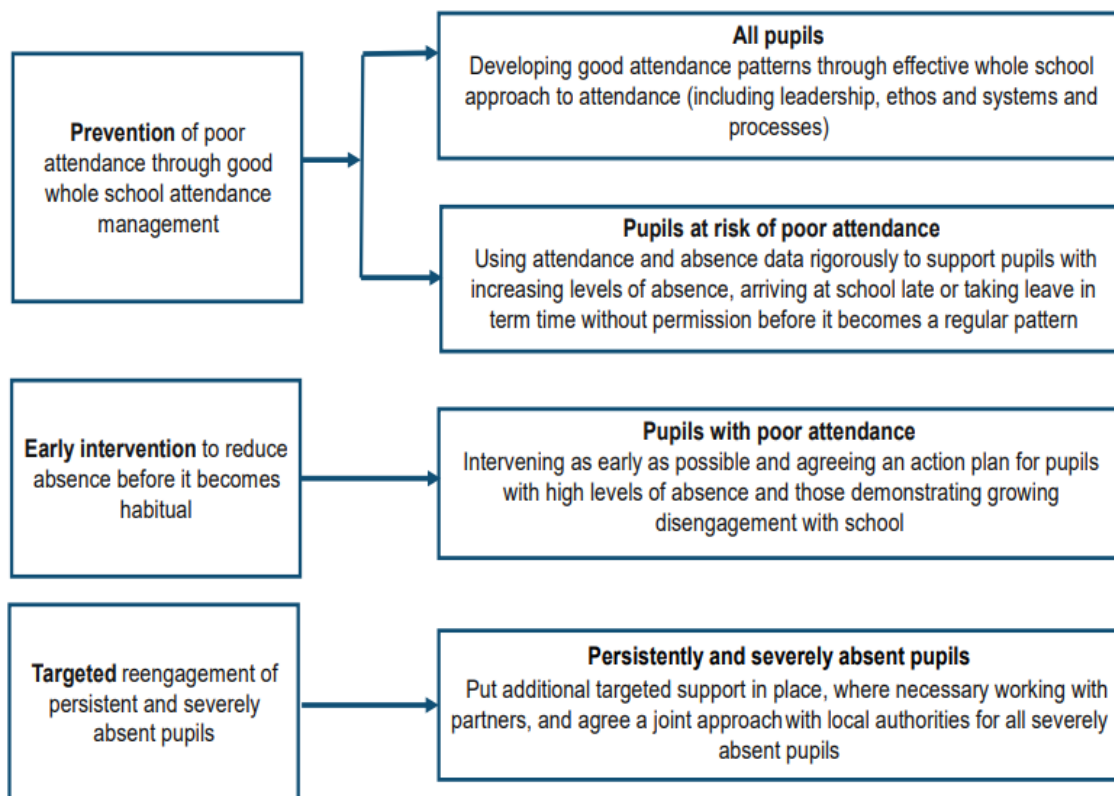
Formalise support

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

Enforce

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

Appendix 5: Effective school attendance improvement and management



Appendix 6: Registration Codes

Attendance and Absence Codes from school year 2025-26				
New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
Attending the school	/	Present at the school - morning session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	\	Present at the school - afternoon session	Attending	Regulation 10(2) Table 1
	L	Late arrival before the register is closed	Attending	
Attending a place other than the school	B	Attending any other approved educational activity <i>Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity</i>	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5), 10(11) and 11(10)
	D	Dual registered at another school	Not counted as a possible session	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(9)(a)
	K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority <i>Schools must also record the nature of the educational activity</i>	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(5) and 11(9)(b)
	P	Participating in a sporting activity	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
	V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending approved educational activity	Regulation 10(3) Table 2 and 11(9)(c)
	W	Attending work experience	Attending approved education activity	Regulation 10(2) Table 2, 10(11) and 11(10)
Absent – leave of absence	C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
	C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(2)
	C2	Leave of absence for compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(6)
	J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(4)
	M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(11)
	S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 11(5)
	X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and

Attendance and Absence Codes from school year 2025-26				
New Guidance - Chapter 8	Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Pupil Registration Regulations 2024 Reference
Absent – other authorised reasons	E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	I	Illness	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(12) and (13)
	Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school sit being unexpectedly closed	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(10)
	Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(14)
	Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause <i>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause</i>	Not counted as a possible attendance	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(6)
Absent – unauthorised absence	G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3
	N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3, 10(7), (8) and (9)
	O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(4) Table 3 and 10(9)(b)
	U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised absence	Regulation 10(8)(b)
Administrative codes	Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date	N/A	N/A
	#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place	N/A	N/A
Internal WNAT Secondary School Codes & sub codes	A	In School Activity		
	A01	Exam	Attending	
	A02	First Aid	Attending	
	A03	Internal Isolation	Attending	
	A04	Medically Excused from PE	Attending	
	A05	Mentor/1-1	Attending	
	A06	Pastoral Team	Attending	
	A07	Peri Music Lesson	Attending	
	A08	Reception Prefect/Student Services	Attending	
	A09	Truanting in school	Attending	
	A10	Workshop	Attending	

Internal WNAT Secondary School Codes & sub codes	7	Unprepared		
	7EQ	Missing Equipment	Attending	
	7LA	No Lanyard (Sixth Form only)	Attending	
	7PE	No PE Kit	Attending	
	7UN	Incorrect Uniform	Attending	
Internal WNAT Secondary School Codes & sub codes	8	Missing Homework/Coursework		
	8CK	Failure to hand in Coursework	Attending	
	8HK	No Homework	Attending	