Melrose Education
SCHOOL

Highgate Hill
House School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	Henrietta Jordan, Schools Director
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1. Aims and Scope

Melrose Education is committed to securing regular attendance through a whole-school, support-first approach. Good attendance is central to safeguarding, wellbeing, progress, and preparation for adulthood. The school will work collaboratively with learners, parents, placing local authorities and other professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance.

- promote the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that every learner of compulsory school age can access an efficient, suitable full-time education, subject only to lawful and exceptional arrangements;
- build strong, respectful relationships with learners and families;
- identify and respond early to emerging patterns of absence or lateness;
- reduce persistent and severe absence through coordinated support;
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners and provide additional support for learners with SEND or health needs;
- maintain accurate admission and attendance registers; and
- work with local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

This policy applies to all learners registered at the school, regardless of age. References to a parent include a natural parent, a person with parental responsibility and any person who has day-to-day care of the learner.

2. Policy Review and Publication

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a material change to legislation, statutory guidance, attendance regulations, or the school's procedures. The policy will be updated sooner where necessary because barriers to attendance and national expectations can change quickly,

When reviewing this policy, the school will, where appropriate, seek the views of learners, parents, and staff. The current version will be published on the school's website, provided when a learner joins the school, brought to parents' attention at the beginning of each academic year and shared again whenever significant amendments are made.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Proprietary Body

The proprietary body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of attendance across the school's ethos, policies, and practice;
- ensuring that leaders fulfil the school's statutory and regulatory responsibilities;
- reviewing and challenging attendance information regularly;
- ensuring that attendance support is appropriately resourced;
- ensuring staff receive suitable training and guidance;
- holding the principal to account for implementing this policy;
- appointing a proprietary body lead for attendance. The group lead is Henrietta Jordan, Schools Director.

The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- implementing this policy consistently within the school;
- ensuring the admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately and securely;
- monitoring school-level attendance and reporting through the principals' weekly assurance process;
- ensuring early and appropriate support is provided where attendance begins to cause concern;
- monitoring the effectiveness of attendance strategies and reasonable adjustments;
- working with the placing local authority and relevant agencies where absence is persistent, severe or presents a safeguarding concern;
- ensuring decisions are individual, lawful, proportionate and informed by the learner's SEND, disability, health, and family circumstances;
- ensuring a senior leader is appointed as the Senior Attendance Champion and that local contact details are completed in Appendix 3.

Senior Attendance Champion

The principal will act as the Senior Attendance Champion unless another member of the senior leadership team is formally designated. The named person and their contact details are recorded in Appendix 3. The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining attendance;
- establishing effective systems for preventing, identifying, and responding to absence;
- ensuring attendance processes are followed consistently by all staff;
- maintaining a strong understanding of individual, cohort, and whole-school data;
- identifying emerging patterns of absence and punctuality;
- coordinating targeted support for learners and families;
- evaluating the impact of attendance strategies and interventions;
- liaising with local authorities, social workers, youth offending team workers, health professionals, and other partners;
- reporting regularly to the principal, Schools Director, and proprietary body.

All Staff

- promote attendance and punctuality consistently;
- record attendance accurately on Engage using the correct national codes;
- save registers by the published closing time;
- report unexplained absence, emerging patterns, and safeguarding concerns promptly;
- listen to learners and families and pass information to the appropriate lead;
- implement agreed attendance support and reasonable adjustments.

School Office and Attendance Staff

- receive and record absence notifications;
- carry out first-day response and follow-up activity;
- ensure unexplained absences are resolved and codes amended within the required timescale;

- maintain accurate records of contact, support, and action on CPOMS and Engage;
- refer parents to the Senior Attendance Champion or pastoral lead for detailed support;
- make required notifications and returns to local authorities.

Parents

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every day and arrives on time;
- contact the school before 9.00 a.m. on the first day of an unexpected absence and on each subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed;
- explain the reason for absence and advise when their child is expected to return;
- provide more than one emergency contact number where reasonably possible;
- arrange medical and dental appointments outside the school day where possible;
- request any leave of absence in advance using the school form; and
- work with the school and relevant services to address barriers to attendance.

Learners

- attend every session for which they are required to attend;
- arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- talk to a trusted adult about barriers that make attendance difficult; and
- participate, where appropriate, in meetings and plans intended to support their attendance.

4. Attendance Expectations and the School Day

Regular attendance means attending every session for the full duration of that session, except where a statutory or properly authorised reason applies. The school's standard registration times are:

Morning session begins	9.00 a.m.
Morning register closes	9.30 a.m.
Afternoon session begins	1.00 p.m.
Afternoon register closes	1.30 p.m.

The school's closing time and any approved local variation are recorded in Appendix 3. The register will be taken at the same time for all registered learners and will never remain open for more than 30 minutes.

5. Admission and Attendance Registers

The school will maintain its admission and attendance registers electronically on Engage in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Every learner registered at the school, regardless of age, will be entered on both registers unless the school is one at which all learners are boarders and the attendance-register exception applies.

The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of every morning session and once during every afternoon session, typically at the start. For each registered learner, the school will record whether they are:

- present at the school;
- attending an approved educational activity at another place;
- absent with leave;
- absent for another authorised reason;
- unable to attend because of an unavoidable cause; or
- absent without authorisation.

The appropriate national attendance or absence code will be entered for every learner for every session. A learner must not be recorded as present unless they are physically present at

the school when registration is taken. Where a learner is attending provision away from the school, the school will confirm attendance with the provider and use the appropriate code. If the learner does not attend the provision, the relevant absence code must be used.

Retention and Amendment of Registers
Admission and attendance registers are legal records. Every entry will be preserved for six years from the date the data was entered. Where an entry is amended, the electronic record must show:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date on which the amendment was made; and
- the name of the person who made the amendment.

The attendance register records the learner's status at the time registration was taken. Entries will therefore only normally be amended where the reason for an absence could not be established at the time, and it is subsequently necessary to enter the correct code. Records will not be altered to improve reported attendance figures.

6. Unexpected Absence and Illness
Reporting an Unexpected Absence
A parent must notify the school of the reason for an unexpected absence before 9.00 a.m. on the first day, or as soon as reasonably possible. Where the absence continues, the parent should make contact on each day unless the school has agreed a different arrangement.

Illness and Medical Evidence
Code I will be used where a learner is unable to attend because of physical or mental ill health. In most cases, the school will accept a parent's notification that their child is too unwell to attend without requiring medical evidence. The school will not operate a blanket rule requiring a doctor's letter, medical certificate, or other evidence for every illness absence.

The school may request reasonable supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, where illness is prolonged or frequently recurring, or where evidence would help the school understand the learner's needs, identify reasonable adjustments, or determine the most accurate attendance code. Before requesting evidence, the school will speak with the parent and, where appropriate, the learner. The school will be flexible about the form of evidence accepted and will avoid placing unnecessary pressure on health professionals.

Evidence may include appointment information, prescriptions, medication records, hospital correspondence, communication from a health professional or other appropriate information. Where illness-related absence is prolonged or recurring, the school will work with the learner, family, local authority, health services and other agencies to identify barriers, make reasonable adjustments, and support a return to education.

The school will make a sickness return to the relevant local authority where a learner is recorded using Code I and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the learner will miss 15 consecutive school days or that the cumulative number of school days missed because of illness during the academic year will reach or exceed 15 days.

Medical and Dental Appointments
Parents should arrange appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the school's agreement should be obtained in advance, and the learner should be absent for the minimum time necessary. Code M will be used where leave has been granted for the appointment. If the learner is present at registration and leaves later during the session, no absence is recorded for that session.

7. Lateness and Punctuality
A learner who arrives after registration has started but before the register closes will be recorded using Code L. Where a learner arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session, the school will establish the reason for the late arrival:

- Code U will be used where no reason has been established or where the reason does not meet the criteria for an authorised absence code; or
- the relevant authorised absence code will be used where the reason meets its statutory criteria.

The school will actively discourage late arrival, monitor emerging or repeated patterns and work with the learner and parent to identify barriers. Support and reasonable adjustments will be considered where lateness is connected to SEND, disability, health, transport, or family circumstances. Persistent lateness will be reviewed in the weekly safeguarding and attendance meeting and recorded on CPOMS.

8. Following Up Unexplained Absence and First-Day Response
Where a learner who is expected to attend does not attend and no reason has been provided, school office or attendance staff will begin first-day response as soon as possible. The school will:

- contact the parent and, where appropriate, foster carer, social worker or youth offending team worker;
- establish the reason for absence and expected return date;
- consider whether immediate safeguarding action is required;
- identify and enter the correct attendance code;
- record contact, decisions, and actions on CPOMS; and
- provide or arrange appropriate support where barriers are identified

Where the reason has not been established before the register closes, Code N will be entered. Every reasonable effort will be made to establish the reason. As soon as the reason is known, Code N will be replaced with the correct code and, in all cases, no later than five school days after the session. If no reason can be established within five school days, the entry will be amended to Code O. **Code N must not remain on a learner's record indefinitely.**

If contact has not been made by 10.00 a.m., the principal and DSPL will be informed. Any home visit, welfare action, contact with children's social care or request for police assistance will be based on the individual risk and the school's safeguarding procedures. Vulnerable learners, including those subject to a child protection plan, looked-after learners, and those where there are immediate safety concerns, will be prioritised. Police assistance will be requested immediately where there is an immediate risk of harm, rather than after a fixed waiting period.

9. Reporting Attendance to Parents
The school will provide parents with clear and regular information about their child's attendance, absence and punctuality through meetings, reports and contact when concerns arise. Communication will not rely solely on headline percentages or labels such as "outstanding," "good" or "problem." Wherever possible, the school will explain:

- the number of sessions or days of education missed;
- any emerging patterns of absence or lateness;
- the individual impact on learning, wellbeing, or relationships;
- the support available and any reasonable adjustments;
- the actions agreed and the date they will be reviewed; and
- who the parent should contact for further support.

Attendance information will be communicated sensitively and in a way that takes account of SEND, disability, health, family circumstances and unavoidable or authorised absence.

Improvement may be recognised where this can be done fairly, sensitively and without discrimination.

10. Leave of Absence During Term Time
All learners are expected to attend every session for which they are required to attend. The principal may grant leave of absence where the circumstances meet the relevant legal and statutory criteria. Requests should be submitted in advance by the parent with whom the learner normally lives, using the form in Appendix 2. The school cannot grant leave retrospectively.

Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, relevant background context, the learner's SEND, disability or health needs, the educational and welfare impact, and any information provided by the family or professionals. The school will not operate a blanket policy that automatically approves or refuses leave solely because of an attendance percentage, the number of days requested or a particular category of event.

A need or desire for a holiday, leisure activity or recreation during term time will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. Where leave has not been granted and the learner is absent for a holiday, Code G will be used. Where leave is granted for exceptional circumstances and no more specific code applies, Code C will be used.

Specific codes will be used for regulated performances or employment abroad (C1), medical or dental appointments (M), interviews for employment or admission to another educational institution (J1), approved study leave for a public examination (S) and a temporary part-time timetable for a compulsory-school-age learner (C2). Study leave will not be granted for mock or internal examinations and will be used sparingly.

11. Education Away from the School
Where a learner is attending education away from the school, the school remains responsible for safeguarding, oversight, and accurate registration. Before using a code that records an approved educational activity, the school must be satisfied that the activity is educational, approved and appropriately supervised, and must have arrangements for the provider to report attendance and absence promptly.

- Code K is used for education provision arranged by the local authority under the relevant statutory powers;
- Code V is used for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by school staff;
- Code P is used for an approved sporting activity;
- Code W is used for approved work experience;
- Code B is used for another approved educational activity arranged by the school; and
- Code D is used only for a session when a dual-registered learner is scheduled to attend the other school.

If the learner does not attend the off-site provision or activity as expected, the school must record the relevant absence code rather than the activity code.

12. SEND, Disability and Health-Related Absence
The school recognises that learners with SEND, disabilities, physical health conditions, or mental health needs may face greater barriers to attendance. High expectations will be maintained, but this policy will be applied fairly and consistently with careful consideration of each learner's individual needs and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.
The school will work in partnership with the learner, family, placing local authority and relevant professionals to identify and remove barriers. Support may include:

- regular meetings to review barriers, support, and reasonable adjustments;

- ensuring the provision in an education, health and care plan is accessible;
- requesting an EHC plan review where provision or needs may have changed;
- pastoral, therapeutic, nursing, or mental health support;
- support with routines, transport, uniform, transitions, and access to lessons;
- adjustments to breaktimes, lunchtimes, or the school environment;
- a time-limited phased return after a lengthy absence;
- early help or other multi-agency support; and
- alternative provision or education arranged in partnership with the local authority where appropriate.

Where a learner's mental health or non-attendance also presents a safeguarding concern, the DSPL will be informed immediately, and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed. The school will not require a mental health diagnosis before making reasonable adjustments or providing appropriate support.

13. Part-Time Timetables

Every learner of compulsory school age is entitled to a suitable full-time education. A part-time timetable will only be used in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the learner's best interests and is temporarily necessary to meet their individual needs. It will not be used as a behaviour-management measure or as an informal exclusion.

Before a part-time timetable is agreed, the school will consider whether reasonable adjustments, additional support, education at another setting or alternative provision could enable access to full-time education. A part-time timetable must:

- have the agreement of the school and the parent with whom the learner normally lives;
- include the learner's views where appropriate;
- have a clear purpose and form part of a wider support, healthcare, or reintegration plan;
- set out the exact sessions, dates, and times the learner is expected to attend;
- include regular review dates involving the learner and parent;
- have a proposed end date and remain in place for the shortest time necessary; and
- be increased towards full-time education as soon as this is appropriate.

Where the learner has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved. Where the learner has an EHC plan, the school will discuss the timetable with the local authority so that the support package and, where necessary, the EHC plan can be reviewed promptly. Sessions not attended under an agreed temporary part-time timetable by a compulsory-school-age learner will be recorded using Code C2. Code X must not be used for a compulsory-school-age learner on a part-time timetable.

14. Remote Education

A learner who is absent from school but receiving remote education is still absent for attendance register purposes. The school will use the absence code that most accurately reflects the reason the learner is not attending in person. Engagement with remote education will be recorded and monitored separately and will not be entered as attendance in the statutory register.

Remote education will only be used as a last resort, after reasonable adjustments and other support have been considered, and as part of a wider, time-limited plan to support the learner's return to face-to-face education.

15. Children Missing Education and Deletion from Roll

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. A learner who is absent from school remains a registered learner and is not automatically a child missing education; however, repeated, or unexplained absence can be an important safeguarding warning sign and may place the learner at risk of becoming missing from education.

The school will monitor unexplained and irregular absence closely, carry out timely enquiries, work jointly with the local authority, and follow the current statutory guidance on children missing education. Where a learner has a social worker or youth offending team worker, they will be informed of unexplained absence and any proposed deletion from the register.

Deletion from the Admission Register
A learner's name will only be deleted from the admission register where a statutory ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met in full. The school will not remove a learner for any other reason and will not delete a learner retrospectively. Attendance will continue to be recorded up to the date immediately before lawful deletion, and the admission and attendance registers will be updated at the same time. A learner will not be removed automatically because they have failed to return for 10 school days after authorised leave or have been continuously absent for 20 school days. Where either ground is being considered, the school and local authority must jointly make reasonable enquiries, all statutory conditions must be met, and there must be no reasonable grounds to believe that the learner is unable to attend because of illness or another unavoidable cause. The school and local authority must also consider whether reasonable support or lawful attendance action could secure the learner's return.

Where a learner of compulsory school age is registered at a Melrose education special school under arrangements made by a local authority, the learner's name will not be deleted without the local authority's consent, except where the regulations expressly provide otherwise. If consent is refused, the learner will remain on roll unless a direction is obtained from the Secretary of State. An annual review, emergency annual review or agreement with an individual caseworker does not, by itself, create a lawful ground for deletion.

All required notifications and information will be sent to the local authority within the statutory timescales. The school will retain evidence of enquiries, decisions, consent, and the precise regulation 9 ground relied upon.

16. Learners Missing During the School Day
Learners will not leave the school premises during the school day unless the school has authorised the arrangement and appropriate supervision or collection is in place. If a learner is discovered to be missing from the premises, staff will:

- inform the principal and DSPL immediately;
- maintain the safety and supervision of other learners;
- search the premises and immediate surrounding area in accordance with the learner's risk assessment and the Children Missing On or Off-Site Policy;
- contact the police and parent promptly where the learner is not located or there is a risk of harm;
- continue to follow police instructions and provide relevant information;
- record the incident, actions, and outcome on CPOMS and the incident system;
- notify Directors through the agreed notification process; and
- review the incident, risk assessments, security, and procedures and implement learning.

The timing of police contact will be based on the individual learner's age, vulnerability, needs, risk assessment, and circumstances. Staff will not delay police contact where there is an immediate safeguarding concern.

17. Regulated Performances, Employment and Activities
Where a learner is taking part in a regulated performance, regulated employment abroad or another activity requiring a licence, exemption or body of persons approval, the school will check that the relevant authorisation is in place and will comply with its terms. Where the authorisation specifies dates of absence, Code C1 will be used for those sessions. Where dates are not specified, any request will be considered individually.

The school will consider safeguarding, educational continuity, SEND, health, and wellbeing and will make appropriate arrangements to reduce disruption to learning. The school will not automatically grant or refuse leave because the learner's attendance is above or below a fixed percentage.

18. Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Learners
The school's usual attendance procedures apply to looked-after and previously looked-after learners, with additional close liaison with the social worker, designated teacher, and Virtual School Head. The local authority is the corporate parent for a looked-after child. The school will share concerns promptly, contribute to the personal education plan and work with the corporate parent and relevant professionals to secure regular attendance and appropriate support.

19. Young Carers
The school recognises that caring responsibilities may create additional barriers to regular attendance. Young carers will be identified sensitively and recorded in the school's management information system and any statutory return that applies. The school will work with the learner and family to understand their circumstances and agree appropriate support, which may include reasonable adjustments, pastoral support, early help, or referral to a young-carer service.

Where a young carer may have needs for support, or where the learner or parent requests an assessment, the school will support the family to access a young carer's needs assessment from the local authority.

20. Formal and Legal Attendance Intervention
Melrose Education schools are independent schools. Independent schools are excluded from the National Framework for Penalty Notices, and the school will not issue, request or refer a case for a fixed penalty notice for absence. Although parents can be prosecuted under section 444(1) or (1A).

The school's primary approach is to work collaboratively with the learner, parent, placing local authority and relevant professionals to identify and remove barriers. Where absence persists, support will be reviewed and intensified. Where voluntary support has not been effective or has not been engaged with, the school will work with the relevant local authority to consider formal support or lawful intervention. Depending on the circumstances, this may include an attendance contract, an education supervision order, statutory children's social care involvement or prosecution by the relevant authority.

Any formal action will be considered individually and will take account of the support offered, the reasons for absence, the learner's SEND, disability and health needs, Equality Act duties, safeguarding concerns, family circumstances and whether further support or reasonable adjustments could improve attendance. Formal or legal intervention will not replace the continuing duty to provide appropriate support.

21. Home Visits and Welfare Action
Home visits may be used to understand barriers, confirm welfare, and provide support. Any visit will be proportionate, recorded and completed in accordance with safeguarding, lone-working and staff-safety procedures. Staff will not undertake a visit where the risk cannot be safely managed. Where there is an immediate concern for a learner's safety, the DSPL will contact children's social care, police, or emergency services without delay. Police assistance will not be used as a routine substitute for school attendance work.

22. Promoting and Improving Attendance
Attendance improvement is a whole school responsibility. The school will promote attendance through a calm, safe and supportive environment, an appropriate curriculum, strong relationships, clear routines, and consistent communication. Recognition of attendance

improvement may be used where it is sensitive, fair, and non-discriminatory. Learners will not be disadvantaged or shamed for absence connected to disability, ill health, or other circumstances outside their control.

The school will develop individual attendance strategies where needed. These may include learner voice, family meetings, support plans, transport review, reasonable adjustments, mentoring, therapeutic or pastoral support, changes to provision, early help, multi-agency planning and referral to the local authority attendance service.

23. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence at individual, cohort, and whole-school level weekly, half-termly, termly, and annually. Analysis will go beyond headline percentages and will consider where relevant:

- individual learners, classes, and year groups;
- patterns by day, session, lesson, and attendance code;
- punctuality and late arrival;
- persistent and severe absence;
- learners with SEND, disabilities, EHC plans, or health needs;
- looked-after and previously looked-after learners;
- learners with a social worker or youth offending team worker;
- young carers;
- learners receiving alternative or off-site provision;
- disadvantaged learners and any other locally relevant cohort; and
- historic and emerging trends and the impact of interventions.

The school will benchmark attendance carefully against appropriate local, regional, national and, where available, similar specialist provision. Benchmarking will not replace consideration of individual circumstances. Attendance information will be reviewed alongside safeguarding, behaviour, SEND, health, wellbeing, attainment, transport, and placement information.

The Senior Attendance Champion will provide weekly information to the principal and relevant staff. A half-termly report on patterns, cohorts, actions, and impact will be scrutinised by the Schools Director. Attendance will remain a standing item in the school's weekly safeguarding meeting.

24. Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more. The school will intervene before these thresholds are reached wherever an emerging pattern is identified.

The response will be support-led and proportionate. It will normally include:

1. Early contact with the learner and parent to understand barriers and agree immediate actions.
2. A formal attendance meeting and written School Attendance Support Plan where concerns continue or intensify.
3. Regular review of progress, reasonable adjustments, and the impact of support.
4. Joint working with the placing local authority and wider partners where absence is persistent, severe, or linked to wider family or safeguarding needs.
5. Formal support or lawful attendance intervention only where appropriate, support has not been effective or engaged with, and individual circumstances have been considered.

Local percentage triggers may be used as prompts for review, but they will not be applied as automatic sanctions or as a substitute for professional judgement. Every stage, contact, plan, review, and decision will be recorded on CPOMS.

25. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Lone Working and Home Visit Procedures

26. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been prepared with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance, as amended from time to time:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Department for Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, July 2026;
- Department for Education, Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, from 1 September 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- statutory guidance on supporting learners at school with medical conditions;
- statutory guidance on education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs;
- Department for Education guidance on providing remote education; and
- relevant placing and home local-authority attendance procedures.

The school will have regard to updated legislation and statutory guidance and will amend this policy where necessary.

Appendix 1: National Attendance and Absence Codes

The following summary reflects the national codes in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the July 2026 statutory guidance. Staff must consult the regulations and current DfE guidance where there is uncertainty. The primary reason for the learner's absence must be recorded, and code-precedence rules must be followed.

Attending the School

Code	Definition	When to use it
/	**Present - morning**	The learner is physically present at morning registration.
\	**Present - afternoon**	The learner is physically present at afternoon registration.
L	**Late before register closes**	The learner arrives after registration starts but before the register closes.

Attending Education Away from the School

Code	Definition	When to use it
K	**Local-authority arranged provision**	The learner attends education provision arranged by the local authority under the relevant statutory powers.
V	**Educational visit or trip**	The learner attends a school-arranged educational visit or trip supervised by school staff.
P	**Approved sporting activity**	The learner participates in an approved educational sporting activity away from school.
W	**Approved work experience**	The learner attends approved work experience arranged as part of their education.
B	**Other approved educational activity**	The learner attends another school-approved, educational, and physically supervised activity away from school.
D	**Dual registered at another school**	The learner is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are also registered.

Leave of Absence and Other Authorised Reasons

Code	Definition	When to use it
C1	**Regulated performance or employment abroad**	Leave has been granted for a regulated performance, regulated employment abroad or an applicable licence or exemption.
M	**Medical or dental appointment**	Leave has been granted for an appointment that takes place during the session.
J1	**Interview**	Leave has been granted for an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
S	**Study leave for a public examination**	Leave has been agreed in advance for study for a public examination. It must not be used for mock or internal examinations.
X	**Non-compulsory school-age learner not required to attend**	The learner is not of compulsory school age, and their agreed timetable does not require attendance for the session.

Code	Definition	When to use it
C2	**Temporary part-time timetable**	A compulsory-school-age learner is absent for an agreed session under a temporary, exceptional, and time-limited part-time timetable.
C	**Exceptional circumstances**	Leave has been granted for an exceptional circumstance and no more specific leave code applies.
T	**Parent travelling for occupational purposes**	The learner is a mobile child travelling with a parent whose trade or business requires travel from place to place.
R	**Religious observance**	The learner is absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parent's religious body.
I	**Illness**	The learner is unable to attend because of physical or mental ill health, not a medical or dental appointment.
E	**Suspended or permanently excluded**	The learner remains on roll following disciplinary suspension or exclusion and no alternative provision has been made for the session.

Unable to Attend because of an Unavoidable Cause

Code	Definition	When to use it
Q	**Lack of access arrangements**	The learner cannot attend because legally required access arrangements are not available in the limited circumstances set out in the regulations.
Y1	**Transport normally provided is unavailable**	The learner cannot attend because transport normally provided by the school or local authority is unavailable and the school is beyond walking distance.
Y2	**Widespread travel disruption**	The learner cannot attend because a local, national, or international emergency has caused widespread disruption to travel.
Y3	**Part of the premises unexpectedly unavailable**	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use, and the learner cannot practicably be accommodated elsewhere on site.
Y4	**Whole school unexpectedly closed**	The school was planned to be open but is unexpectedly closed for the session.
Y5	**Criminal justice detention**	The learner is in police detention, remanded to youth detention or detained under a sentence.
Y6	**Public health guidance or law**	The learner is well enough to attend, but attendance would be contrary to applicable public-health guidance or law.
Y7	**Other unavoidable cause**	An emergency or other unavoidable cause affecting the learner prevents attendance and no other Y code applies.

Unauthorised Absence

Code	Definition	When to use it
G	**Holiday not granted**	The school has not granted leave, and the learner is absent for a holiday. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively.
N	**Reason not yet established**	The reason is unknown when the register closes. The code must be replaced as soon as the reason is known and no later than five school days after the session; otherwise it must become O.
O	**Other or unknown circumstances**	No reason has been established, or the reason does not meet the criteria for an authorised absence code.
U	**Arrived after register closed**	The learner arrives after the register closes but before the session ends, and no authorised reason applies.

Administrative Codes

Code	Definition	When to use it
Z	**Prospective learner not yet on roll**	Used only to prepare the register before the learner's agreed admission date. The learner must be added to the admission register on the agreed first day.
#	**Planned whole-school closure**	Used for planned closures such as holidays, weekends where required by the MIS, bank holidays and INSET days.

Important Code Notes
There is no current national Code H for an authorised holiday. Code C is used where exceptional leave has been granted and no more specific leave code applies. Code X must not be used for a compulsory-school-age learner simply because they are not expected on site; the correct activity, leave or absence code must be used.

Appendix 2: Request for Leave of Absence

Guidance for Parents
Requests must be made in advance and should normally be submitted at least four weeks before the proposed absence. The school cannot grant leave retrospectively. Each request will be considered individually. A holiday, leisure activity or recreation during term time will not normally be an exceptional circumstance. Melrose Education schools are independent schools and fixed-penalty notices do not apply; however, persistent unauthorised absence may be referred to the relevant local authority for support or other lawful intervention. Although parents can be prosecuted under section 444(1) or (1A).

Parent to Complete	
Learner's full name	
Class / year group	
Parent's full name	
Parent's relationship to learner	
Dates requested - from / to	
Number of school sessions requested	
Detailed reason for request	
Supporting information attached	
Parent's signature and date	

Appendix 2 (continued): School Review and Decision

School Use Only
The decision must be based on the individual facts and circumstances. Attendance percentages may provide context but must not operate as an automatic approval or refusal rule.

School Office to Complete	
Date received	
Current attendance information (context only - not an automatic decision rule)	
Relevant SEND, health, safeguarding, or placement information	
Previous leave requests during the current academic year	
Principal's Decision	
Decision - approved / not approved	
Dates and sessions approved	
Attendance code to be used	
Reasons for the decision	
Support, advice or local-authority referral required	
Principal's signature and date	

Appendix 3: School Specific Attendance Information

Required Information	School Details
School Name	Highgate Hill House School
School Address	Whitstone, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6TJ
School Telephone Number	01288 341998
School Email Address	info@hhhschool.co.uk
Principal	Kerry.Anderson@hhhschool.co.uk
Senior Attendance Champion	Sarah Burnard
Senior Attendance Champion Email / Telephone	Sarah.Burnard@hhhschool.co.uk; 01288 341998
Day-to-Day Absence Contact	Sarah Burnard
Contact for Detailed Attendance Support	Sarah Burnard
School Day Begins	9.00 a.m.
Morning Register Closes	9.30 a.m.
Afternoon Session Begins	1.00 p.m.
Afternoon Register Closes	1.30 p.m.
School Day Ends	3:00 p.m.
How Parents Should Report Absence	01288 341998

Appendix 4: Policy Implementation Checklist

Done	Implementation requirement
☐	Appendix 3 has been completed for the individual school.
☐	The named Senior Attendance Champion is a member of the senior leadership team.
☐	The policy is published on the school website and shared with parents.
☐	Engage is configured with the current national attendance codes.
☐	Code H has been removed from all systems, forms, and local guidance.
☐	Code N is reviewed and replaced within five school days.
☐	Morning and afternoon registers are taken at the same time for all learners and close within 30 minutes.
☐	Staff understand that remote education does not count as attendance.
☐	Part-time timetables use Code C2 and meet the safeguards in this policy.
☐	Penalty-notice wording has been removed from letters and forms used by the independent school.
☐	The leave-of-absence form in Appendix 2 has replaced the former form.
☐	The former attendance poster based on percentage labels has been removed.
☐	Staff have been briefed on the July 2026 attendance guidance and the 2024 Registration Regulations.
☐	The policy has been approved through the school's governance arrangements.