



Department
for Education

Keeping of school attendance and admission registers – frequently asked questions after the first half term

Attendance register

1. When can the attendance register be amended?

The attendance register must reflect an accurate record of a pupil's attendance at the time it was taken. The register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Occasionally it may be necessary to make an amendment where an inaccuracy in recording has been identified.

Where amendments are made, schools must ensure the register shows 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 - in line with regulation 6 of the [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

2. What should be recorded in the attendance register when a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed?

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be recorded as absent. This should be the same for every pupil and every session and not longer than 30 minutes.

Where the circumstance of a pupil's absence is not established when the register is taken, their absence will be recorded as code N. If the pupil attends school after the register has closed, but before the end of the session, code N should be replaced with the appropriate absence code, otherwise code N should be replaced with code U.

For example, if a pupil arrived in school after registration because leave of absence had been granted for a medical appointment, Code M would be recorded.

3. What code should be recorded for remote education?

As set out in the Department's guidance on '[Providing remote education](#)' (first published in 2022), pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, crediting pupils for their efforts, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register.

The Department is clear that schools may continue to provide remote education in line with the guidance and we recognise the value it can add to pupils who would not otherwise be able to access education. Schools and local authorities are expected to provide support to pupils who are facing barriers to attendance and should do so in the pupil's best interests rather than how it is recorded in the attendance register.

This is an existing position and has not changed with the introduction of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 or the statutory guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)'.

The definition of an approved educational activity has been strengthened in the new Regulations. This followed feedback from Ofsted, the Children's Commissioner and public consultation and ensures code B is only used where the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the educational activity takes place safely and fulfils the purpose. Supervision in this context means the pupil is physically supervised by someone who meets this definition. Similarly for code K, we would expect educational provision arranged by the local authority to be physically supervised by someone who the local authority considers to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose.

4. When can code Y6 (Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance and law) be used?

Code Y6 is only used where a pupil is well enough to attend school (otherwise Code I would be recorded) but there are Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease which say they should not attend.

Government guidance in this context means guidance published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland). That would not, for example, include NHS guidance or information published by other non-Governmental bodies.

Code Y6 must also be used where legislation is in place relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease, as it was during the pandemic for example.

5. Does attending an educational trip affect a pupil's attendance?

No, where a pupil is on an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff, Code V is recorded. This code is classified for statistical purposes as attending an approved educational activity.

If the pupil does not attend the visit or trip, the school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

6. Can open days, taster days and entrance exams be recorded under Code J1?

Code J1 must only be used where a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

Open days, taster days and entrance exams must therefore be recorded with the correct code depending on the individual circumstances of the case.

For example:

- Where a pupil is attending an open day in school time with their parents then a leave of absence would need to be granted at the school's discretion (recorded with Code C where granted).
- Where the pupil is attending a taster day at their new school that their existing school deems to meet the definition of approved educational activity in the Regulations, Code B may be appropriate.
- Code B may also be appropriate, where a school deems an entrance exam satisfies the criteria for approved educational activity.

7. How should absence be recorded for pupils not of compulsory school age?

Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is timetabled to attend the school, their absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.

Code X must only be used where a pupil not of compulsory school age is absent with leave because they are not attending the school full-time and their timetable does not require them to attend.

8. When can T Code be used?

T Code is used to record a session where a mobile child is unable to attend school because their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the child is travelling with them. Other absence for mobile children is recorded with the appropriate code as it would be for any other pupil, e.g. if they are ill then Code I is recorded.

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.

'No fixed abode' means that someone either does not have a settled place where they can live full-time, or they have a place where they can live full-time but they spend substantial periods of time not living there. So, a mobile child could be a child whose family travels all year round as part of their trade or business and has no permanent address at all, but it also includes a child who does have a fixed place to live (like a house) but does not live there for a substantial part of the year, if their parent is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place.

Admission register

9. When is a child's name added to the admission register?

Before a pupil can be registered at a school the parent (or prospective pupil if they are old enough) must have accepted the offer, either by agreeing the starting day in advance or the pupil attending the school on that day.

Schools must enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name must be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.

A person with control of the pupil's attendance is usually the pupil's parent (or the pupil themselves if they are over compulsory school age). There may be a small number of cases in which this is another person such as a governing body when requiring a pupil to attend another school to improve their behaviour (off site direction).

10. What happens if there is a duty to admit like after being named on a School Attendance Order or Education Health and Care Plan?

A duty to admit a pupil does not change the requirement for a parent to accept the school place and agree a starting date. A duty to admit means a place must be made available for the child but they must be added to the register in the same way as any other before, or at the beginning of the first session on the agreed start date (or the first day they attend the school).

11. Can a pupil's deletion from roll be backdated to when they stopped attending the school?

No, the admission register must be an accurate record at the time to which it relates. A pupil must only be deleted when one of the grounds for deletion in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met and this cannot be backdated to before the ground was met just because the pupil was not attending school. The pupil must be deleted as soon as the ground is met.

For example, if a pupil is a suspected child missing education and they stopped attending on the 1st March the pupil cannot be deleted until the joint reasonable enquiries have been conducted by the school and local authority. If these are completed on 1st April and the ground has been met the pupil is deleted from the admission register then, not 1st March.

Further information

Full details of all of the attendance and absence codes as well as schools' other requirements under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 are set out in the 'Working together to improve school attendance'

guidance and training webinars for school staff are available on the DfE YouTube channel.

- Working together to improve school attendance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/made>
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools>