Ashton Community Science College

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review Schedule

Named Owner:	Miss S Connon- Assistant Headteacher
Date Of Creation:	
Last Review:	September 2026
Next Scheduled Review:	January 2027
Overview of Amendments to this Version:	Principles edited to incorporate wider importance of school attendance Inclusion of inclusive attendance multi-tiered support Punctuality sanctions, change of registration opening and closing times Inclusion of attendance contract as intervention measure Strategy to reduce persistent absence included 19/1/26 – 7 lates in a term rather than in a half term

AIM

Ashton CSC is proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our unwavering commitment to attendance centres around child-centric actions, evidence-informed practices, and a shared understanding of everyone's roles and collective responsibilities to promote exceptional attendance.

"Good attendance at Ashton CSC is attending every day and being punctual"

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026, through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns. Attendance information will therefore be used alongside safeguarding systems to identify children who may require additional support or protection

Principles

School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education. It plays a pivotal role in shaping academic success, personal growth, and future prospects, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system. Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- *Academic Achievement:* Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- *Knowledge Acquisition:* School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- *Social Development:* School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- *Building Routine:* School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- *Teacher Interaction:* Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.
- *Preventing Knowledge Gaps:* Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- *School Engagement:* Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.
- *Legal and Parental Responsibility:* Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to legal consequences.

- *Community Well-being:* High levels of school attendance contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026 and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contentsThe Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/madeIt also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

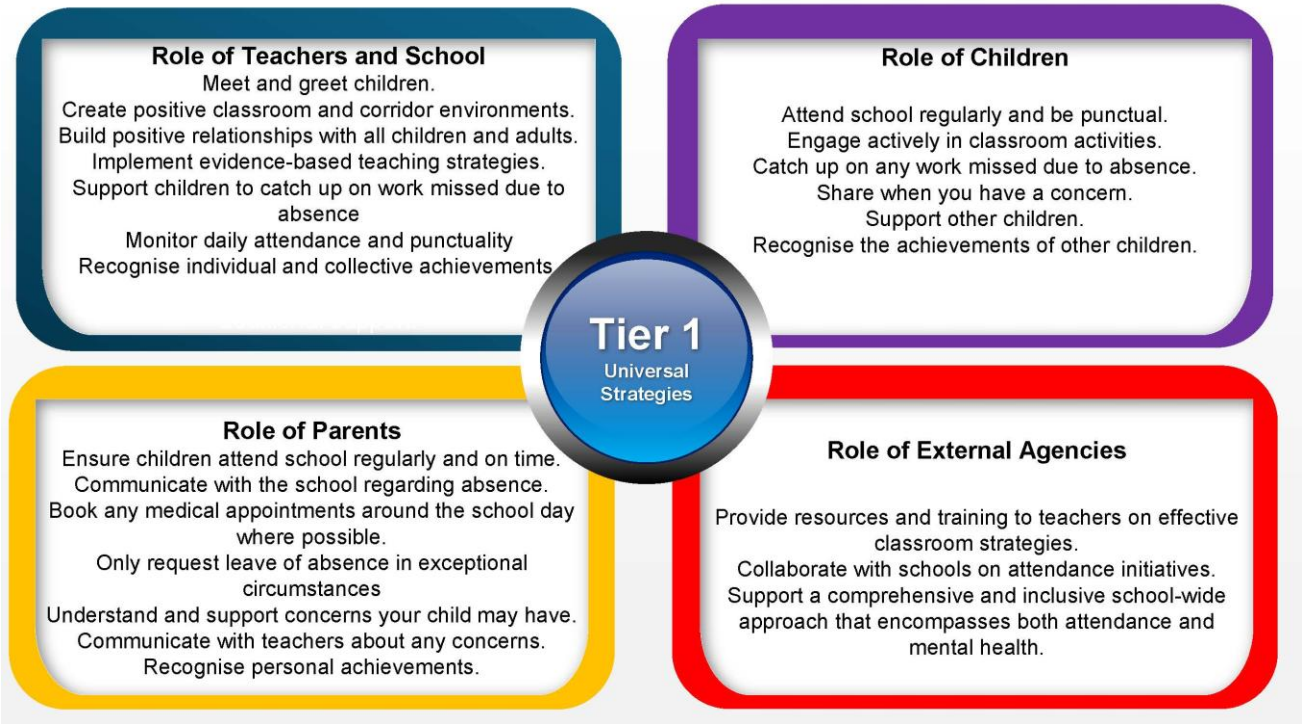
Roles and responsibilities

A Multi-Tiered System of Support

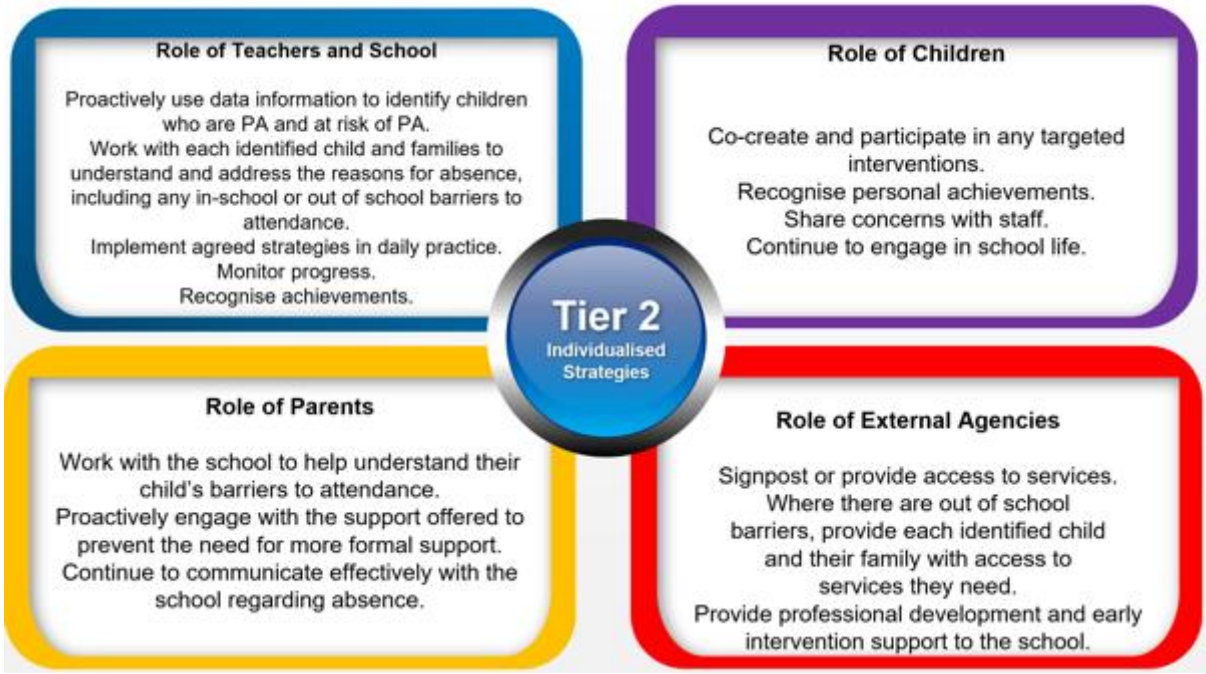
To guarantee a comprehensive approach to attendance, Ashton CSC implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for school attendance involves three tiers of intervention, with roles for teachers, the school, children, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority.

Data-driven decision-making and training requirements are pivotal to the implementation of this system. The system aligns with the Department for Education's (DFE) Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026.

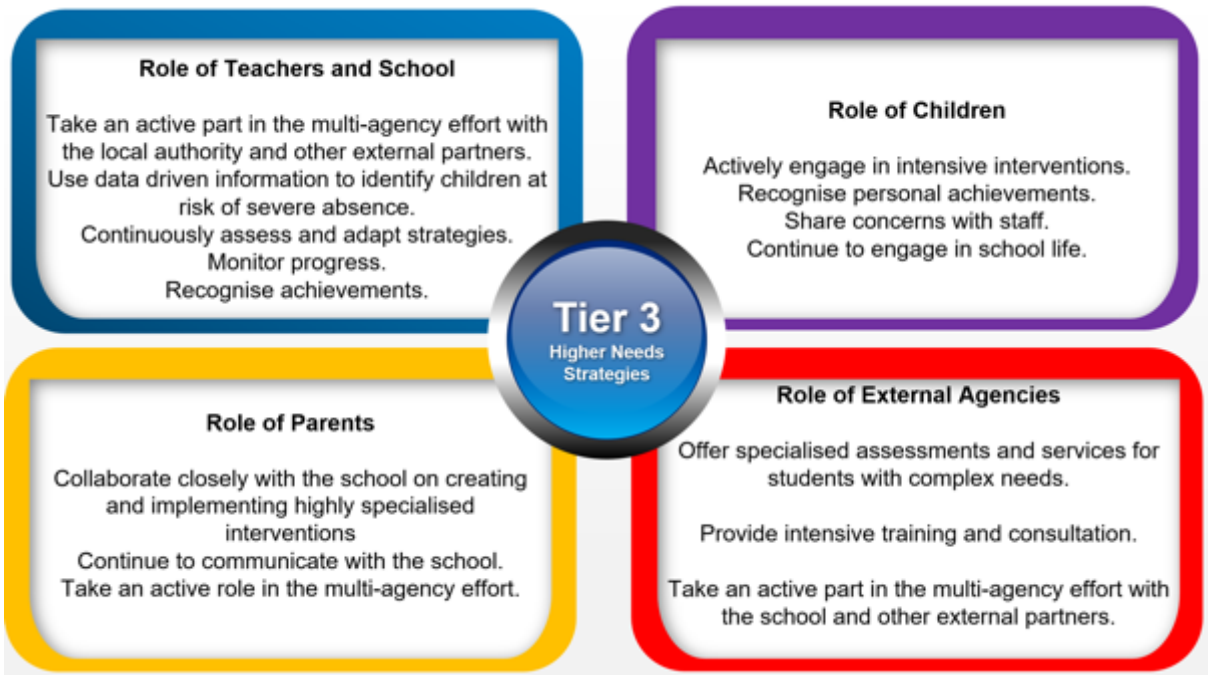
Tier 1 - Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



Tier 2 – Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



<u>Attendance including Authorised and Unauthorised Absence</u>

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. Students are expected to attend school from 8.40 until 3pm every day, unless alternative provision has been put in place by school. If a student is absent, every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only the Headteacher can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Examples of reasons for absence which the school will usually authorise include:

- Medical appointments which cannot be reasonably arranged outside school hours. Where possible, pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment. (proof of appointment may be required)
- Most illness, although on occasions a doctor's note may be required
- Meetings with external agencies where the student has no control over the time of the appointment
- Career related interviews/appointments, particularly in Y11
- Attendance at the funeral of immediate family
- Certain days for religious observance

Some examples of reasons for absence which the school will not authorise include:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Unexplained absence (no contact from parents to explain the absence)

- Truancy
- Non urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Late after the register has closed
- Shopping/Babysitting younger siblings/ Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Where there are genuine concerns regarding authenticity of absence, where illness is prolonged or recurring.
- Closure of a sibling's school for teacher training or other purposes

DfE guidance regarding attendance codes can be found in **Appendix A.**

Punctuality

Arriving on time for school is important as lateness can severely affect achievement through missing lessons. In addition, it is important that students develop good habits for being punctual in preparation for adult life.

Students are greeted on their yard at 8.35am every morning by their form tutor and Head of Year and enter the school building to arrive at their form room for the start of the school day at 8.40am. Students arriving in school after 8.40am will be marked as present but arriving late (L code). Students arriving late (before registration is closed at 9.15am) will be placed in a 10 minute breaktime detention. Persistent late arrivals before the register has closed (3 lates in a week, 7 lates and above in a term) will be placed in an additional 30 minute detention the following day after school.

Students arriving after the registration has closed at 9.15am will be recorded as late after registration (U). This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session. will be placed in a 10 minute breaktime detention and an additional 30 min catch up session will take place the following day to provide time to catch up on work missed.

Informing the School of Absence

Parents/carers are to inform school on the first day of their child's absence no later than 9.00am. Parents/carers are then encouraged to contact school every day throughout their child's absence. Failure to inform the school will result in a member of the year team or attendance team endeavouring to contact parents/carers but a lack of response could ultimately lead to an unauthorised absence.

The schools preferred method of communicating absence is through school synergy, alternatively parents can phone on the school telephone number, selecting the option to report a student absence.

Leave Of Absence

As of 1st September 2013 Headteachers, cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave.

An application for a leave of absence form can be found on the school website or collected from the attendance office and should be submitted as early as possible.

Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional. In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- the timing of the request e.g. when a student is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible. Students should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. GCSE or any other public examinations.
- the student's current attendance rate
- other periods of leave which the student has had, either during the current or previous academic year

Recognition

Ashton Community Science College endeavours to ensure all students recognise the value of good attendance and punctuality. This will be promoted through the school through curriculum time, form time and assemblies. Posters in all classrooms will reinforce this message as will larger displays around the school. In addition, we actively seek to celebrate and encourage high levels of attendance and also recognise where efforts have been made to improve attendance and punctuality.

Examples of rewards for attendance and punctuality include:

- Personalised messages to parents through synergy attend for improvement in attendance/punctuality
- Praise and verbal communication within school
- Whole school attendance incentives eg No days off in November
- Personalised recognition for individuals to support improvement in punctuality/attendance
- House points awarded by form tutor/ HoY
- Weekly assembly celebrations
- Recognition postcards
- Annual celebration evenings

Attendance and Punctuality Intervention Strategies

Ashton Community Science College takes a proactive approach in monitoring students' attendance and punctuality, and we work closely in partnership with parents and other appropriate agencies to improve levels of attendance and punctuality where concerns exist. Some of the strategies used include:

- Attendance tracking to ensure all students are aware of their current attendance
- Attendance mentoring through the year teams, pastoral team, form tutors or other appropriate staff
- First day contact system by telephone and use of text messaging service
- Priority contact for students identified as vulnerable
- Home visits and welfare checks for absences of 3 days plus
- Half termly contact with parents keeping them up to date with the total number of days absence to date.
- Letters to parents highlighting current attendance and concerns
- Messages/phone calls/meetings with parents addressing punctuality issues

- Work by the attendance and pastoral teams to identify patterns of absence and the causes of these.
- Weekly welfare meetings between Year Teams and the Attendance Lead to identify concerns and put strategies in place
- Attendance meetings and home visits
- Curriculum modification over a specified period of time or alternative provision for individuals as appropriate to their needs and circumstances.
- Reintegration support packages
- Where SEMH and wellbeing concerns are identified as a possible barrier to attendance these are considered sensitively and appropriate support is signposted or provided in partnership with families and relevant external services.
- Use of EBSA toolkit where appropriate
- Completion of an EHA / referral to other agencies for family support where appropriate
- Attendance contracts as a formal support mechanism with agreement from parents, student and school with a plan to improve irregular attendance
- Where attendance difficulties are linked to disability, SEND, mental health or medical needs, reasonable adjustments are considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Support plans may include phased reintegration, modified timetables, adjusted entry arrangements, safe spaces, pastoral support and multi agency involvement
- Part time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances where it is in a pupil's best interests. They will be clearly documented, time limited, regularly reviewed with parents/carers and focused on a planned return to full time education
- Remote education will not normally be used as an alternative to attendance at school. Where necessary, it will form part of a planned support strategy with the aim of returning the pupil to face to face education as soon as possible.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is defined as students being absent for 19 days or more (10%) of the school year, regardless of the reasons (Section 5: DFE guidance "Working together to improve school attendance" 2022).

To help prevent students becoming persistently absent from school

- Parents receive half termly updates on the number of days absence each child has had to date alongside their risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Incorporate attendance, punctuality and risk of persistent absence in data captures and reports sent to parents.
- Senior attendance champion and pastoral team track attendance by number of absences and number of days absence to ensure early intervention and parental engagement to identify barriers as early as possible and review improvement.
- Students are identified as being at high risk of persistent absence when their days of absence suggest they will have 19 days absence by the end of the academic year.

Severe absence

Severe absence is defined as students being absent for 95 days or more (50%) of the school year regardless of the reasons for absence

To help prevent students becoming severely absent from school

- Parents receive half termly updates on the number of days absence each child has had to date alongside their risk of becoming severely absent.
- Incorporate attendance, punctuality and risk of severe absence in data captures and reports sent to parents.
- School will continue to work closely with parents, the local authority, health professionals and other appropriate agencies to evaluate the impact of interventions already in place and implement further intensive support plans.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £120 which are issued by the Local authority, under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003, when a pupil has 10 or more sessions (equivalent to five days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalties can be used where the student's absence has not been authorised by the school, including truancy and persistent late arrival after the registers have closed. Penalties will always be issued when holidays are taken during term time; Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer for each child.

The DFE have recently introduced national changes to penalty notices which came into effect from 19th August 2024.

Please see **Appendix B** for more details of the staged approach and rates of fines at each stage.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Legal Sanctions

In rare occasions, intervention by the school, working with parents, may fail to bring about an improvement in attendance or punctuality. The Local Authority may decide to prosecute parents. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child, if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternative Provision

As a result of specific medical needs or as a strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour, it may be necessary to direct a pupil to Alternative Provision. During this time, attendance is monitored in exactly the same way as if the pupil was accessing their education at Ashton Community Science College. Failure to attend Alternative Provision would lead to the same attendance procedures such as Fixed Penalty Notices and possible court action.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Attendance updates are broken down by year group and analysed by gender, SEN status, LAC, young carers, pupils with social workers, ethnicity, pupil premium etc. to identify and respond to trends.
- All staff undertake inclusive attendance training appropriate to their role including safeguarding links, early identification of attendance concerns and strategies to support attendance improvement.
- Monitoring of individual student attendance to identify those absent for prolonged periods or frequently which may indicate a safeguarding concern.
- Tracking in place for pupils at risk of PA and SA
- Attendance data is discussed in weekly meetings with year teams and Senior Leaders.
- Current attendance and persistent absenteeism trends shared with the Governing Body every term.
- Link governor with responsibility for strategic oversight, policy development and ensuring statutory obligations are met.
- The governing body review attendance trends termly, challenging persistent and severe absence rates, monitoring attendance of vulnerable groups and evaluate the effectiveness of the whole school attendance strategy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
Admissions Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Single Equalities Policy
Social Inclusion Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy

Appendix A: Attendance codes

Appendix A

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
K	Other educational provision	Attending educational provision arranged by local authority

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C2	Reduced timetable	Leave of absence for a pupil subject to a part-time timetable over a short defined time.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
Q	Unable to attend due to access arrangements	Unable to attend because of lack of Local authority access arrangements
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

In addition to the DfE codes, the school adopts the following codes to use in lessons to signify where a student is in school, but is present in a session other than their lesson.

Code	Definition	Scenario
A	Present	The ARC
8	Present	The Nest
9	Present	The Diggery
2	Present	Additional Intervention

Lancashire County Council

Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period[1]. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Absences can have a lasting effect on learning

Missing a week of school means your child will miss around 25 hours of learning

This creates gaps in their knowledge and could mean they will not meet their full potential

[1] A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once.