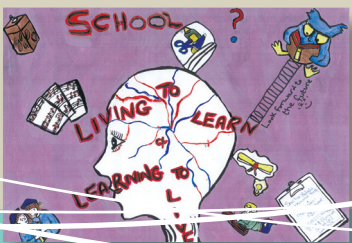


September 2006



The Education Welfare Service

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - Advice for Schools



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Here to Help

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Legal responsibilities	3
3. Attendance Registers	4
4. Attendance procedures	5
5. Measures to encourage and sustain good attendance	6
6. Pupils returning after a period of non-attendance	9
7. Holidays during term time	10
8. What to do in case of irregular attendance	10
9. Deleting pupils from the Admissions Register	11
10. The role of the Education Welfare Service	12
11. Legal action	13
Appendix A: Categories of Absence	16
Appendix B: Attendance Codes	23
Appendix C: Definition of a parent	25

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The importance of schools developing effective policies and practices to ensure regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular school attendance is a prerequisite for a successful education and securing good attendance should be a priority for schools, governors, local authorities, parents* and pupils. Attendance data is used increasingly as a major performance indicator for schools. Irregular school attendance disrupts and undermines a child's educational performance and there are strong links between truancy and social exclusion and crime. Poor attendance and lateness at school adversely affect the individual pupil but also disrupt other pupils and teaching staff.
- 1.2** When a child is a registered pupil at a school, it is the parents' responsibility and their legal duty to see that their child attends school regularly. Whilst the majority of parents will impress upon their children the value of punctual and regular school attendance, schools should seek to work in partnership with all parents to encourage such values. Parents, through their representatives on Governing Bodies and Parents' Associations may also support and promote regular school attendance.
- 1.3** Every school should have an attendance policy and procedures. The school's expectations and procedures regarding pupil attendance should be clearly understood by school staff, pupils, parents and governors, all of whom should be aware of their roles and responsibilities in encouraging and achieving high levels of school attendance. Senior staff members should have overall responsibility for attendance.
- 1.4** It is important that a school's attendance policy is consistent with other policies in the school, for example on curriculum areas, special educational needs, equal opportunities, discipline and bullying. This is because poor school

ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS

attendance affects all these areas and vice versa. Attendance policies and procedures should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are effective.

- 1.5** Prompt actions by schools to address attendance concerns with pupils and their parents are usually the most effective measures but in cases of persistent absence and lateness, the involvement of the Education Welfare Service (EWS) may be required.
- 1.6** The purpose of this booklet is to assist schools with understanding their responsibilities concerning school attendance issues and to provide information about the associated legislative and regulatory requirements and the role of the EWS.

2 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1** The legal framework governing school attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated Regulations. In summary, once a child becomes a registered pupil at a school:
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.
 - Local authorities have a legal duty to ensure that parents carry out their responsibilities.
 - Schools have a legal duty to record attendance and absence of registered pupils in compliance with the Regulations.
 - Governing Bodies have a legal duty to ensure that school registers are kept in accordance with the Regulations and should publish attendance figures in their Annual Report to Parents and in the school's prospectus.
- 2.2** The Royal Borough discharges its enforcement obligations, including the prosecution of parents, through the EWS.

ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

Governing Bodies naturally look to headteachers to secure the discharge of their legal responsibilities.

3 ATTENDANCE REGISTERS

3.1 The Attendance Register is a legal document and must be kept accurately and neatly and according to the Regulations. Section 434(6) of the Education Act 1996 says that if anyone “contravenes or fails to comply with” the requirements of the Regulations, he or she is committing an offence and could be prosecuted. The Attendance Register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute data to pupils’ end-of-term reports, to Records of Achievement, and to leavers’ references. The Attendance Register is a confidential document and care should be taken that information from it is not disclosed to parents and children. The Royal Borough’s EWS provides advice to schools about register keeping.

3.2 The Attendance Register must be marked at the commencement of each morning and once during the afternoon session. The Attendance Register must show:

- (a) the presence or absence of every pupil whose name is entered in and not deleted from the Admission Register and
- (b) in the case of any such pupil of compulsory age who is absent, whether or not his or her absence is authorised.

3.3 There are several categories of authorised and unauthorised absence, and standardised code letters* are used to distinguish them. Parents do not authorise absence. It is for the school to decide whether or not the reason given for absence is an acceptable one: “a pupil’s absence is authorised if he has been granted leave of absence by any person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor”. Where it is not possible to record at the commencement of a session whether

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

or not a pupil's absence is authorised, that information must be recorded as soon as practicable after it becomes known to the person with responsibility for completing the Attendance Register. If the child was away from school due to illness, or any other "unavoidable cause", the law says that this must be in relation to the child only. Further guidance about types of absence is given in Appendix A and National Attendance Codes are provided in Appendix B.

4 ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

4.1 Schools need to be clear about what parents are expected to do when children are absent from school or late. Parents should be expected to contact the school on the first day of the child's absence to explain the reason for the absence and to establish an expected date of return. On the child's return to school, the parent should provide the school with a written explanation for the absence. A similar system should be devised to ensure that parents provide explanations when their children arrive late for school.

4.2 Headteachers should determine who in the school has responsibility for contacting parents when an explanation for a pupil's absence is not received.

- When a child is absent without explanation, parents should be contacted by a specific member of staff as soon as possible, ideally on the first day of absence.
- When a pupil has been absent for three days without an explanation, a standard letter should be sent home. This action should be recorded in the Attendance Register along with the date the letter was sent.
- A letter should also be sent when a pupil returns from absence without a letter of explanation.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

- Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be dated, named and initialled by the member of staff who receives them. These notes should be kept. Schools should devise a system for ensuring that such notes are transferred to the child's individual school file at regular intervals. Please note that such documents may be required in legal proceedings.
- When explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents should be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent their child(ren) from attending.
- A similar system should be agreed to address children who arrive persistently late for school.
- Schools should be vigilant for longer-term patterns of poor attendance and punctuality and use school procedures to address these.
- Schools should adopt systems to detect and deter truancy from individual lessons as well as to encourage punctuality for lessons.
- All contact with parents should be recorded, either in the Attendance Register or in the school file.

5 MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN GOOD ATTENDANCE

5.1 Each school should have developed its own Attendance Policy in consultation with pupils, parents, staff, the EWS and the Governing Body. In reviewing its policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality, the school may wish to ask the following questions:

- Have the school's expectations about attendance and punctuality been made explicit to all pupils, parents and

school staff, and are high standards emphasised regularly?

- Does the school have clear and consistent procedures for following up absences with pupils and parents?
- Do all school staff members know what to do when a child is absent or if there are concerns about the child's absence or general attendance rate?
- What measures are taken to ensure that all staff are trained to keep registers properly and how are registers monitored?
- Is there a senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance?
- How does the school seek to encourage improved attendance and punctuality rates through pupils, parents and school staff?

5.2 Positive encouragement also helps to raise attendance and punctuality rates. Schools should recognise good and improving attendance levels of individual pupils and of class groups. A system of rewards can prove very successful in improving attendance and punctuality levels. Such rewards might include:

- letters of congratulation and certificates for good attendance which may be taken home;
- special privileges;
- mentions in assembly;
- the award of badges;
- the giving of prizes such as mascots or a cup for the highest class or tutor group attendance.

Other strategies to be considered include the following:

- a first day call back procedure;

STRATEGIES

- sending letters to parents of new pupils after the first possible 100 attendances with special praise both for those with one hundred per cent attendance and for those with no avoidable absences;
- recording attendance totals on pupils' reports with positive comments for effort;
- noting improvements in attendance on the school record of pupils who previously had poor attendance rates;
- regular late watches with senior staff at the school's entrance;
- sending children to senior members of staff for commendation of efforts made towards improvement as well as for full attendance;
- setting up a sub-committee of school governors to meet with parents of pupils with poor attendance patterns and encouraging them to return at a later date to talk about improvements they might have made;
- identifying children "at risk" of developing attendance problems before they transfer to another class or group or school and devising ways of supporting them;
- including attendance related matters in the induction programme for all new staff and in particular for newly qualified teachers;
- setting attainment goals for individuals or class or year groups.

5.3 Rewards for good attendance are likely to prove more effective than sanctions for non-attendance. Nevertheless, there will be occasions when pupils and their parents need to be challenged about poor attendance. Schools should consider how this is to be done and what action should be taken to ensure consistent practice among staff. Care should be taken

that children who may be struggling to attend regularly and punctually in the face of adverse home circumstances are not unintentionally discouraged by the use of sanctions. At the same time, poor attendance should never be accepted as a natural consequence of geographical location or of prevailing community and environmental circumstances.

6 WHEN PUPILS RETURN AFTER A PERIOD OF NON-ATTENDANCE

6.1 How a child is received back in school after a period of poor attendance or unauthorised absence may crucially influence whether he or she is to achieve and maintain an improvement in attendance. The following recommendations are made:

- Pupils should be welcomed back to school, irrespective of why they have been absent. Teachers should avoid misplaced irony when a pupil returns after a period of non-attendance.
- Gentle encouragement and support in organising missed work helps to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed. This should be carefully coordinated beforehand if possible by the head of year and/or class teacher/tutor.
- Parents should be actively involved in their child's re-integration. Inviting the parents into school and deciding on joint strategies may achieve this.
- Older pupils might be encouraged to act as helpers, befrienders or mentors to help to promote re-integration.
- Class teachers and tutors should promote within the tutor group a positive atmosphere which is welcoming to the returning pupil.
- Placing a pupil on Attendance Report may be supportive in some situations.

- Any internal support structure (for example, special needs provision, peripatetic support) should be used flexibly.

7 HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

7.1 Regulations allow, on an application made by the parent, for the child to be granted leave of absence by the Headteacher for an annual family holiday during term time. However, “save in exceptional circumstances, a pupil must not be granted more than two weeks’ leave of absence in any year”. If holidays are taken without the permission of the school, the resulting absences should be seen as unauthorised and marked as that in the Attendance Register.

Nevertheless, when considering whether to grant extended leave of absence, schools should be sensitive to the needs of children whose extended families live overseas. This is particularly the case when there are cultural or religious reasons for such leave.

If parents ask the school to permit an extended family holiday, they should agree a return date with the school. If the child is not back in school by the agreed time, and if no contact has been made by the parents, the school can remove the child from the Register after 10 school days have elapsed unless the child is too ill to attend or there are other unavoidable causes. If parents are not able to give a firm return date, they should be advised that their child’s name may be removed from the school roll and that in those circumstances they would need to re-apply for a place on their return. Any absence from the school for holidays without the permission of the Headteacher must be recorded in the Attendance Register as unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority (LA) as appropriate.

8 WHAT TO DO IN CASES OF IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE OR LATENESS

- 8.1** Under the Pupils' Registration Regulations, all schools are required to report to the LA any pupil with continuous absence of not less than two weeks, and any pupil who otherwise fails to attend regularly, except when the absences are authorised by reason of the child's illness. However, this is a minimum requirement and the child's LA should be informed regularly in cases of interrupted attendance patterns. Schools should refer such cases to the EWS.

It is not legally permissible to remove a child's name from the Register because he or she is not attending regularly or truanting. The Regulations prescribe the only legally acceptable reasons for the removal of a child's name from the Register. Although schools may remove the child's name where he or she "has been continuously absent from school for four weeks and the proprietor of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry, to obtain information of the cause of absence," this should not be used as a reason for removing a child from the Register if an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is working with the child and his or her family. In such circumstances, there may well be information about the cause of the absence, albeit unauthorised.

9 DELETING PUPILS FROM THE ADMISSIONS REGISTER

- 9.1** Schools should seek the advice of the EWS before removing a child from roll. There are strict rules governing when schools can delete pupils from their Register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, as amended. If a pupil is to be taken off the Register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school

and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school; or
- if a pupil has “disappeared” from the area without explanation; or
- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

If schools are concerned, they should seek advice from the EWS without delay as other child protection services including the police may need to act. If, however, school staff have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should immediately contact the police.

10 THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

10.1 The Education Welfare Service (EWS) is the part of the local authority (LA) with responsibility for promoting, encouraging and enforcing regular school attendance of children resident in the Royal Borough. The EWS believes that all children have a right to receive an education appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. The EWS seeks to work in partnership with the child, family, schools and other agencies to support the education and welfare of children.

10.2 When schools and Education Welfare Officers are working effectively together, many or all of the following practices are observed:

- There is clear agreement between the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) about the best ways in which to deploy the time and energy of each in responding to attendance and punctuality problems.

- There are shared and clearly defined criteria and procedures for referring to the EWS non-attendees and children who arrive persistently late.
- Standard referral forms are used so that there is an accurate written record of the pupil's basic family details as well as other important information. Accurate records need to be kept and communicated to the EWS regarding the school's actions with the child, family and any other agencies to address the referred problem.
- The EWO is consulted about any initiatives being undertaken within the school concerning attendance and punctuality.

10.3 When a referral is made to the EWS an EWO will be allocated to the case as soon as possible. The EWO will respond to the referral by arranging to meet with the parents and the young person in order to discuss the referral and to ascertain any reasons for the lack of regular attendance or punctuality. The EWO will make an assessment and decide a plan of action over an appropriate time period in order to address any problems. The EWO will be in regular contact with the school, the parents and young person and will liaise with other support services and agencies where appropriate. The progress of the case will be regularly reviewed by the EWS to see whether revised plans or other interventions are needed or if the child or young person's attendance and/or punctuality has improved to the point where further EWS involvement is not required.

10.4 **The booklet *The Education Welfare Service: School Attendance - The Role of the EWS* provides more information about service delivery.**

11 LEGAL ACTION

11.1 If despite the best efforts of the school and the EWS, a child is still not attending regularly, then legal action may be considered. Before instigating any legal action, the EWS

carefully considers the appropriateness of legal action in each case. Decisions are guided by the legal enforcement policies of the EWS and of the Royal Borough, and the EWS is advised by the Council's legal department.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent of a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school to fail to ensure that the child attends school regularly. Trials concerning this matter take place only in the Magistrates Court where if found guilty a parent could be fined up to £1,000. In cases prosecuted for the higher offence under Section 444(1A) where it is proved the parent knew of the truancy and failed to act, a maximum fine of £2,500 may be issued as well as or instead of imprisonment for up to three months. In practice, penalties are very much less in most cases as they depend on the parent's circumstances; fines of £100 to £250 are more usual.

The offence is one of strict liability. In other words, there is no need to prove any intent on the parent's part. The LA can only prosecute in cases where the amount of unauthorised absence constitutes irregular attendance. There are several statutory defences that could be offered and the law states that an offence has not been committed if any of the following is proved:

- the child was absent with the leave of the school;
- the child was ill, or unable to attend due to an unavoidable cause;
- the child's absence was on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong;
- the school is not within walking distance of the child's home, and the LA has not made arrangements for either transport to and from school, boarding accommodation or a school place nearer to the child's home.

In cases where the child's LA takes the matter to Court either to prosecute the child's parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or to apply for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989, evidence will need to be provided showing that the child was not attending school regularly and that absences were unauthorised. Evidence is usually presented to the Court in the form of a certified extract of the Attendance Register, which shows how many times the school was open for education, how many times the child attended, and the levels of authorised and unauthorised absence. The Certificate may only be signed by the Headteacher, who certifies it as a true record of the child's attendance as shown in the Attendance Register. This evidence is usually accepted by the Court but in disputed cases the LA may need to present the Attendance Register in Court as evidence, with supporting evidence from the teacher who marked it. It is therefore vital that Attendance Registers are kept accurately, and in accordance with the Regulations. EWOs usually act as witnesses for the prosecution case but teachers may also be called in evidence.

- 11.2** Either in addition to or instead of instigating a criminal prosecution, the LA may apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO). The ESO, if granted, is made under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989. It places a child under the direct supervision of the LA for a year (it can be extended on application), and during that time the child and parents are obliged to follow reasonable directions of the supervising officer (usually an EWO). The supervisor's role is to advise, assist and befriend the young person and parents and use a plan in order to secure the young person's education. If parents fail persistently to comply, they can be prosecuted; the maximum penalty is £1,000 per offence and if the young person fails to comply then a referral to Social Services to investigate may result. An ESO will only be issued if the Court is satisfied that the Order and the proposed plans are appropriate and necessary.

Appendix A

- 11.3** In circumstances where a child is not on a school roll, or where the education that a parent is providing at home is deemed to be not suitable, the LA may make a School Attendance Order. This is not an order of a court, but instead requires the parent of the child to cause the child to become a registered pupil at the school named in the Order. Failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum fine of £1,000 per offence.
- 11.4** Under more recent legislation (Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) it is now possible to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents of pupils with poor attendance as an alternative to prosecution. The penalty is £50 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice rising to £100 if paid after 28 days but before 42 days. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

For further advice about school attendance issues, please contact the EWS: Tel: 020 7598 4886

Appendix A

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Illness, medical and dental appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Parents and pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours if possible. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attendee.• If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Illness, medical and dental appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency. • If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the School Health Service, or the pupil’s GP. • A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked present.
Days of religious observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence should be authorised if this is on a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. • Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.
Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school (including entrance examinations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff should normally ask for advance notice and proof of the appointment, e.g. a letter of invitation. • If the interview takes place during Year 11 and the school is satisfied that it is linked to future education or employment prospects, absence can be recorded as “approved educational activity”.

Appendix A

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Study Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study leave should be used sparingly and only for Year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.• Study leave should not normally exceed 15 school days during Year 11.• If possible the period of study leave should be less than the examination period. Regard should also be paid to the individual pupil's ability to manage study leave and benefit from it.• Unsupervised study leave is not an "approved educational activity"; it is authorised absence.
Dual Registration involving Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The law allows for dual registration of pupils at both a PRU or special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education.• Where a pupil is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil authorised absent while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child.• Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.

Reason for Absence	Remarks
<p>Family holidays during term-time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term. • Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. • If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised. • If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is unauthorised unless there are special circumstances. • Schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. • Schools should only, exceptionally, agree absence of more than 10 school days in a school year (and 10 days' holiday should not be regarded as the norm).

Appendix A

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.• If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the pupil takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised.• Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.
Traveller child when the family is travelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling.• While the Traveller is away, the base school holds the place open and records absence as authorised.

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Traveller child when the family is travelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.
Family bereavements or child caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences. Similarly, schools may authorise limited duration absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made.
Special occasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not. Schools should consider: the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the pupil's overall attendance pattern.
Public performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Authority must license a pupil to take part in a public performance. Agreed participation should be treated as authorised absence.

Appendix A

Reason for Absence	Remarks
Birth of Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support should be directed to keeping the pupil in school wherever possible, and to her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth.• A pupil who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised.
Lateness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival that could provide grounds for prosecution.• Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. Thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable, but schools can set shorter periods.• In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.

Appendix B

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence

Appendix B

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Religious observance	Authorised absence
R	Study leave	Authorised absence
S	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
T	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
U	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
V	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
W	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix C

Throughout this document, the term ‘parents’ refers to all those who have parental responsibility as defined under the Children Act 1989. It is possible for several people to have parental responsibility for a child at the same time. Guardian ad litem appointed for the child by the court have parental responsibility. Also, any person with a Residence Order or an Emergency Protection Order with regard to the child as well as the Social Services Department if the child is the subject of a Care Order, all assume parental responsibility while the orders are in effect. A father who was not married to the child’s mother can only acquire parental responsibility through a variety of defined channels. It is therefore important that schools maintain up to date records of who holds parental responsibility for each child. Such information should be recorded on the school’s admission register.

Although this document refers to the child’s ‘parents’ it is acknowledged that many children are raised by a single parent. If parents are separated then schools need to be sensitive to each parents’ rights to be informed about their child’s progress at school.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines ‘parent’ in education law as:

- all natural parents whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child i.e. a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, regardless of what their relationship is with the child is a ‘parent’ in education law.

Posters featured on the front of this booklet
'ATTENDANCE' POSTER COMPETITION 2003

Competition winners:

"School is Fun":

Ambre Battistella

KS1, St Francis of Assisi Primary School

"Every Moment Counts...":

Rudi Salmon

KS2, Fox Primary School

"School? Living to Learn, Learning to Live":

Sacha Baillie

KS3, Parkwood Hall School



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