



DUNCLUG COLLEGE

Attendance Policy

Version	Date	Revision Author	Summary of Changes
1.0	Dec 2018	Mr McNeilly Mr McKillop	
Internal review	2024-2025	Mr McKillop	Updated appendices to support procedures. Changes to terminology.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Dunclug College believes that good attendance and punctuality are central to the learning process. For a child to succeed in the school environment it is essential that a high level of attendance is maintained. It has been proved that there is a strong correlation between success and attendance. Dunclug College aims to maintain and build upon its present and past successes. Therefore, a target of **96%** is what the school will aim to attain over the next two years. This means that a clear, workable policy to monitor, improve and maintain attendance needs to be in place. This policy will involve a partnership with the school, parents/carers and the Education Welfare Service (EWS). Clear guidelines for this are essential and must be supported by all.

Initially parents will be made aware of the school's target and its general approach to the maintenance of good attendance. In an annual letter to all Parents/Carers the school will emphasise the need for good attendance by all and set out clearly the steps it intends to take to ensure this is maintained. The Induction Programme for Year Groups shall also play an important part in the promotion of good attendance. The school will ask Parents/Carers to work closely with it to question casual sickness, to make medical and dental appointments after school and generally to encourage a positive approach.

School Leadership will make the Board of Governors aware of its policy and work closely with the School Council and Dunclug College Friends Foundation (DCFF) to ensure Parent/Carer support. The key to good attendance does lie with Parents and Carers. The school will make clear its expectation by recording all absence and will require a contact, written or via telephone, in order to maintain records and aim for high attendance standards. Parents/Carers will want close contact with the school when their child is absent because in a few cases it is the contact from the school that alerts them to truancy.

The school will have a clear workable procedure that will identify casual, long term or patterns of absence and have mechanisms to deal with each. The school will be proactive in involving Parents/Carers to reduce absence and ensure they are kept informed about any changes in policy.

The Form Teacher will play an important role in the promotion of good attendance. Often, they will be the first to notice a pattern of absence within a class. The Form Teacher will encourage good attendance and highlight its importance. Minor absences will be the responsibility of the Form Teacher confirming reasons and checking that notes have been received. The Form Teacher will also initiate a letter to Parents/Carers on a pupil's third day of absence. This letter will simply ask the Parents or Carers to contact the school to confirm the reason. This will begin the formal process of Parental/Carer contact, the steps of which are outlined below.

1) *Continuous Absence:*

- 1.1) Any absence is recorded on the SIMS Lesson Monitor Module.
- 1.2) On the third day of absence a letter is sent via parent app from the school asking the Parents/Carers for explanation (The Form Teacher/ Assistant Head of Year prepares this).
- 1.3) If an unexplained absence continues into the next week the Form Teacher or Assistant Head of Year will telephone the home.
- 1.4) After eight days of unexplained absence the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director requesting a home visit.
- 1.5) An end of term letter will be sent home via parent app to pupils whose overall attendance has been giving cause for concern.

2) *Periodical Absence:*

- 2.1) If in the month the number of unexplained periodical absences gives concern then a parent app shall be sent to the registered parent/carer.
- 2.2) If in the month the number of unexplained periodical absences continue to give concern then the EWS will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting a home visit.
- 2.3) If the absences are covered by a Parent/Carer note then initially the Assistant Head of Year or Form Teacher should contact the home and voice the school's concern about the number of absences. This call to Parents/Carers will be of a supportive nature to bring about improvement.
- 2.4) If there is a pattern of absence, e.g. every Friday, then the parents will be contacted by the Assistant Head of Year/ Head of Year and asked to provide reason for this.
- 2.5) If periodic absence becomes chronic e.g. three days a fortnight, then the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting to make a home visit.

3) *Latecoming:*

- 3.1) Latecoming will be highlighted and recorded on SIMs and in extreme cases of lateness via the period class teacher using Lesson Monitor.
- 3.2) If a pupil is very late e.g. thirty minutes plus, then they must provide a note written by the Parent/Carer either on the same day or the following day. This should be

presented to their Form Teacher. It is acceptable for a parent to make contact via telephone to identify the reason.

- 3.3) If a pupil is late more than three times in the month then they will be expected to 'catch up' on lost learning at the end of the school day after Parents/Carers have been informed via parent app (issued by the Head of Year or Assistant).
- 3.4) If the latecoming becomes persistent, Parents/Carers will be contacted by the Form Teacher or Assistant Head of Year.
- 3.5) Pupils who have a bus pass but are dropped off by their Parents/Carers will not be deemed to be late until after 9.00am.
- 3.6) If the latecoming continues and becomes chronic then the Assistant Head of Year will contact the Parents/Carers and arrange for a support meeting to be conducted. (See Appendix 1)

4) *Truancy:*

- 4.1) If any pupil absents themselves from school without permission, then the parents will be contacted by phone and the pupil detained after appropriate notification.
- 4.2) If truancy happens more than once, then the Parents/Carers shall be invited to the school by the Assistant Head of Year to discuss the concern.
- 4.3) If truancy becomes chronic then the E.W.S. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting a home visit.
- 4.4) If a pupil has been involved in truancy on a regular basis, each time there is a subsequent absence the Parents/Carers will be contacted. If the pupil has been kept at home for legitimate reason, then an agreement will be reached whereby the Parent/Carer will contact to inform the school.
- 4.5) The school will commit itself to monitoring the attendance of a pupil who has been involved in regular truancy by placing them on period report.
- 4.6) Period truancy shall be managed initially by the classroom teacher and Head of Department. This will be supported by the Assistant Head of Year who will arrange catch up sessions for lost learning to any pupil who absents themselves from classes. Truancy is a serious concern and will result in additional catch-up time. A continued concern will be referred through the Pastoral System, and the school will endeavour to put supports in place through their Head of Department, Head of Year or EWO. (See Appendix 2)

The school works closely with the service of the EWS and will endeavour to develop and build upon an effective and long-standing partnership. It is recommended that the EWS will meet the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School on a fortnightly basis at a time agreed by both. The Education Welfare Officer will attend school each week to facilitate workshops and conduct meetings with allocated families.

As part of the attendance policy the school will utilise a reward system whereby good attendance is rewarded. It is important to reinforce positive aspects of attendance therefore the school will take steps to do this

5) *Reward System:*

- 5.1) Each month an attendance trophy will be presented to the class with the best attendance in each year group.
- 5.3) If a pupil has achieved 1 month's full attendance, they will receive an individual certificate and will be awarded additional merits.
- 5.4) If a pupil has a full year's attendance they will receive a special award. The pupil must attend the annual awards ceremony to receive this.
- 5.5) Parents/Carers of pupils who have full attendance or perhaps have missed one day shall be written to by the principal congratulating the pupils on their achievement.
- 5.6) A pupil who has moved from poor attendance to good attendance will also be recognised and reward by the school. This is monitored by the Form Teacher and Assistant Head of Year.

The monitoring of attendance is significant role of the Form Teacher and the Assistant Head of Year. The Form Teacher has a unique knowledge of the form class and after a period of time can identify those pupils whose attendance record is of concern. Pupils who are potentially poor attenders can be supported by Form Teachers, through counselling and Pathways provision to encourage improved attendance. This means that the Form Teacher will have access to relevant information on SIMS about the patterns of absences in their class.

6) *Form Teacher and SIMS Lesson Monitor:*

Lesson Monitor as an e-tool is used to monitor and analyse pupil attendance. It provides opportunity to focus on lateness to class or any other situations which arise throughout the school day or individual lessons via the 'add comment' feature.

- 6.1) The Form Teacher is responsible for taking a role call each morning during registration. This takes place between 9.00am and 9.15am. Pupils will be marked absent or present in the AM session of the period timeline.

- 6.2) If a pupil is absent the Form Teacher will enter that pupil as absent for the AM session. The class teacher will follow on this pattern for each period throughout the school day. Should the pupil arrive late the class teacher will mark the individual present and record, via the 'add number of minutes late' feature.
- 6.3) Office Staff will mark any pupil late into school for the AM session of that day if they have missed registration.
- 6.4) A pupil returning to school following a period of absence will provide their Form Teacher with a note explaining the reason for absence. The Form Teacher will edit the absent mark for that period according to the explanation for e.g., illness, holiday, bereavement etc. (see appendix 3)
- 6.5) On Monday of each week the Form Teacher will use SIMs to view the previous weeks attendance. Should any aspects require investigation the Form Teacher should liaise with the Assistant Head of Year and make the necessary contacts and amendments.
- 6.6) Following the routine ensures sound management and accurate attendance data for parents/carers, pupils and external agencies.

7) ***Class Teacher and SIMS Lesson Monitor:***

- 7.1) Class Teachers are responsible for taking a roll call for each period throughout the school day. Child Protection is an important link with this aspect of Lesson Monitor, should a pupil appear absent from a lesson the Assistant Head of Year can observe very quickly at a glance where and when this occurred and appropriate action can then be taken.
- 7.2) Throughout the school day Class Teachers will mark pupils **present or absent**. For example, if a pupil is attending a talk in the Assembly Hall, they are not absent from school nor are they educated elsewhere – they still achieve a present mark. If they are on a field trip/day trip that can be coded an Educational Visit (V). Should a pupil be on work experience, they are coded (W). For a full list of codes used (see appendix 3)
- 7.3) **Period 7 staff** are responsible for the afternoon session. This mark is vital in achieving full day attendance. (Present for both AM and PM sessions).
- 7.4) Class teachers can track pupil attendance across the school day and identify absence.

8) Assistant Head of Year and SIMS Lesson Monitor:

- 8.1) The Assistant Head of Year has oversight of their own specific year group and will view and compare the patterns of attendance between classes. It is the Assistant Head of Year's role to implement the policy that has been laid out. It is also a role of the Assistant Head of Year to set targets for form classes across the school year. Attainable and realistic targets will be necessary to reach the overall school attendance target. Therefore, the Assistant Head of Year can be mutually supportive through the Pastoral Committee when setting targets. It is often one class that can bring down the set target for a whole year. The Assistant Head of Year carries out analysis and annual comparisons to identify months when attendance has been poor and use strategies to focus in on those periods. It may be possible to set tests during these months or set specific key activities since these can affect attendance in a positive way.
- 8.2) Strategies for improved attendance will be discussed in calendared year team meetings. It is a role of the year team to discuss attendance and share ideas. These ideas can be transformed into good practice and this good practice must be shared between year groups. It will be the year team who will decide on suitable rewards for good attendance.
- 8.3) The Assistant Head of Year will support their Form Teachers in the use and management of Lesson Monitor. They will regularly review attendance records and maintenance for each form class under their remit and follow through with support, where necessary, should the need arise.

9) Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School and SIMS Lesson Monitor:

- 9.1) The Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School will liaise with all Assistant Heads of Year and provide adequate training and support on attendance matters. This will take place on School Development Days, during Year Team meetings or Pastoral Key Stage meetings.
- 9.2) The Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly with the Assistant Head of Year and discuss strategies which could be implemented to improve attendance for year groups as a 'whole' and report as and when required to the Senior Leadership Team, the Vice Principal or Principal.

Electronic Communication

- 9.3) **SIMs Parent App** – provides a parent who has registered with the App the opportunity to view a range of information pertaining to their child or children. This includes a live attendance daily overview and % attendance statistic for each child.

The Attendance Policy must relate to the whole school and this includes Key Stage 5 - years thirteen and fourteen. Even though the return to school is a matter of choice, once they have enrolled, senior pupils will have committed themselves to the rules and regulations of the school. All senior pupils will be expected to attend every day, in fact their regular attendance is essential for success at this level. Senior pupils will also be expected to set an example to the rest of the school.

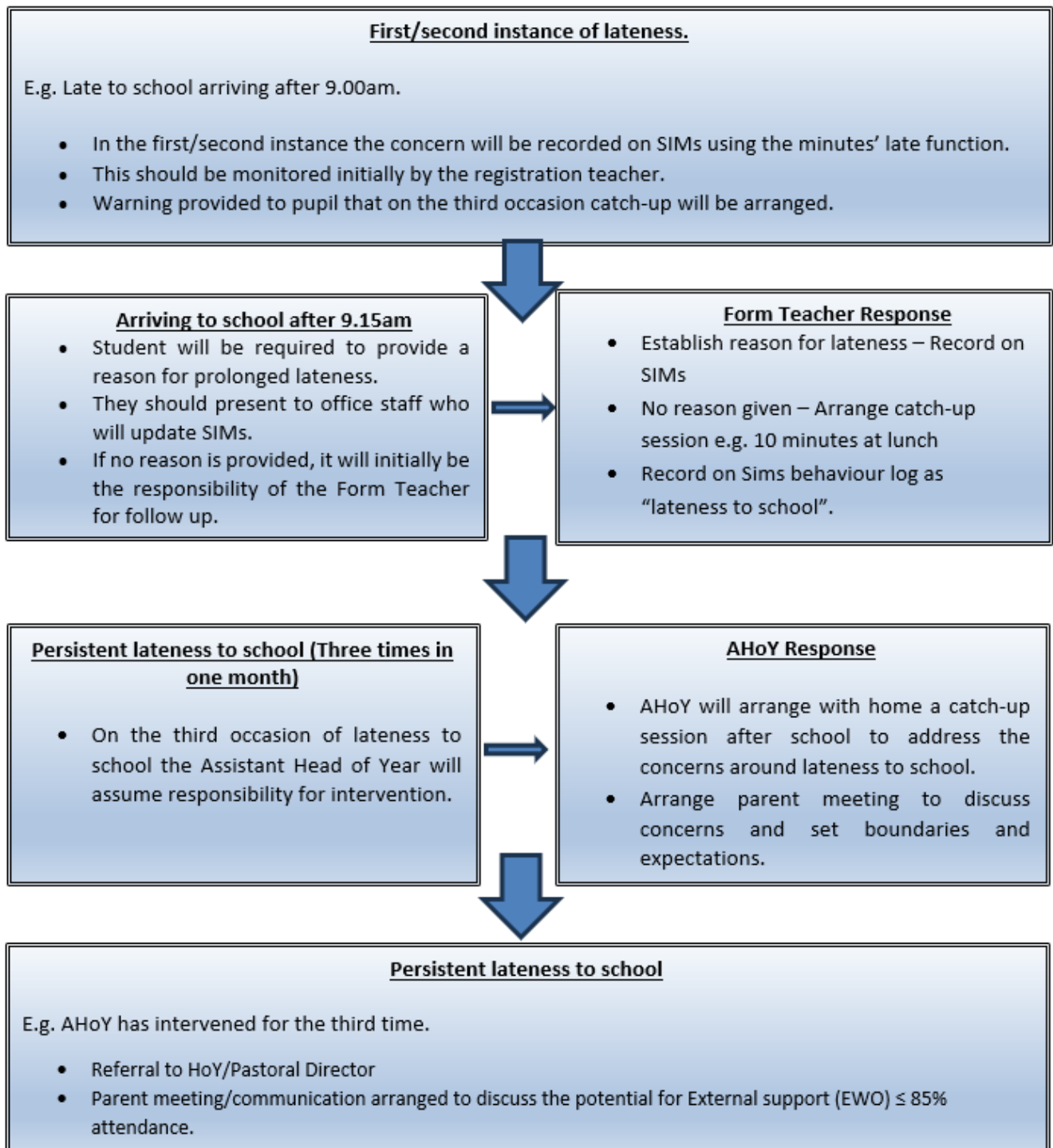
When a pupil demonstrates an interest in returning to school for post 16 study, a key factor for consideration will be their attendance over the previous 5 years of education. Particular attention will be paid to the attendance record of the previous year. A prospective pupil who had below average attendance will be asked to commit themselves to a higher level of attendance if they are successful at interview. To confirm this a senior school contract will be drawn up. During the induction programme for returning to senior school the importance of good attendance will be emphasised. The same process for monitoring attendance across the school will also apply to the senior pupils. (See the Year 13/14 Hand Book).

It is the responsibility of everyone to promote good attendance. Staff, pupils, parents/carers and outside agencies must share the same focus and maintain the common goal which is 'high standards of attendance and the promotion of positive educational experiences for all

Appendix 1: Punctuality to school flow chart.

SCHOOL PUNCTUALITY - SEPTEMBER 2025

Attending school on time is a vital part of a student's success. Punctuality reflects commitment, responsibility, and respect for learning. When students arrive on time, they start the day positively, avoid missing key instructions, and contribute to a focused and productive learning environment. Regular lateness disrupts not only the student's own progress but also the learning of others. By promoting good punctuality, we help students build habits that support academic achievement and prepare them for future responsibilities in education, employment, and life.

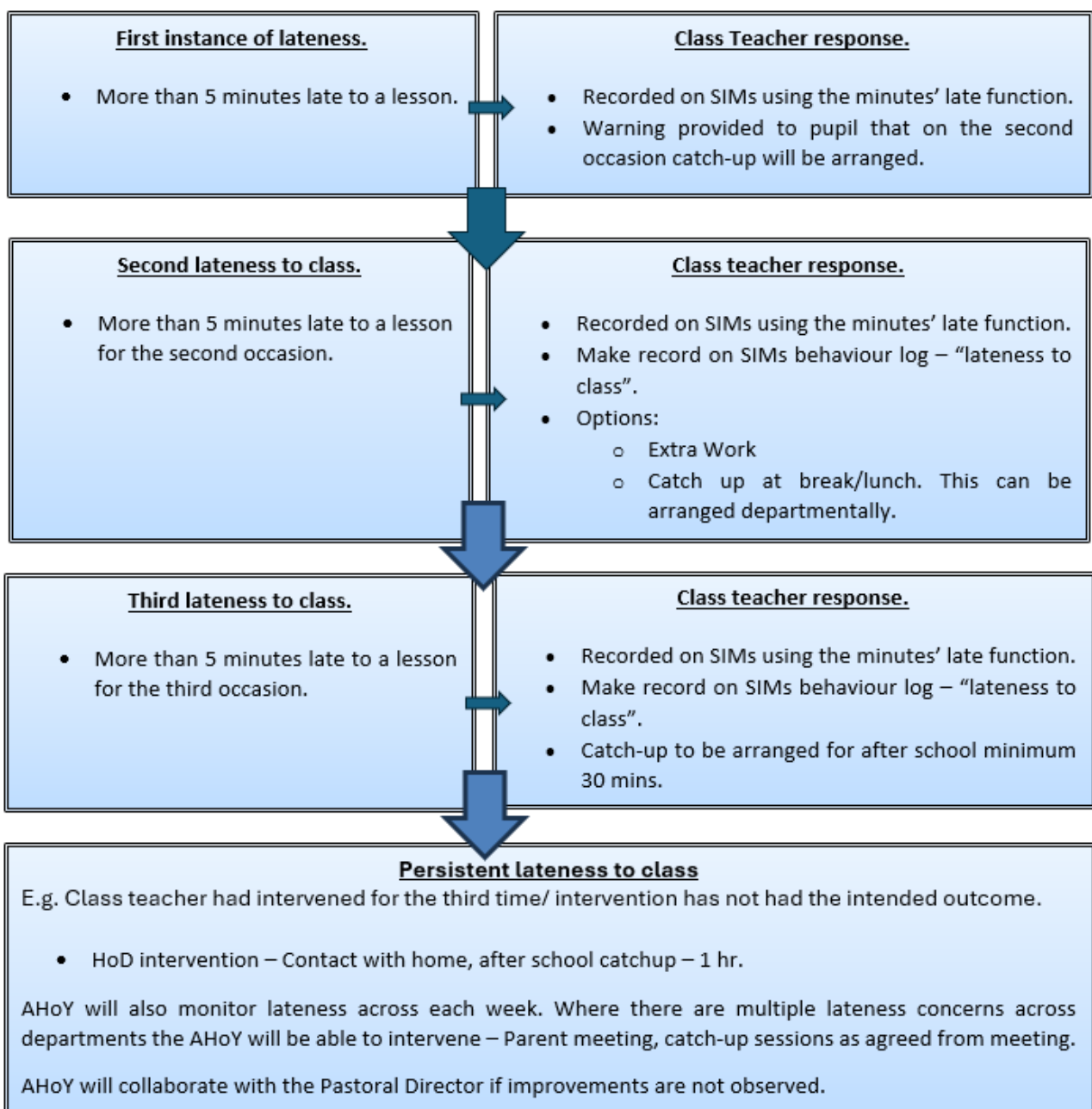


Appendix 2: Punctuality to lessons flow chart.

PUNCTUALITY TO LESSONS - SEPTEMBER 2025

Punctuality to lessons is a key factor in maintaining high standards of learning and behaviour across the school. When students arrive on time, they are more likely to be focused, prepared, and ready to engage. It sets the tone for the lesson and reinforces a culture of respect and responsibility. Teachers play a vital role in modelling and reinforcing punctuality, ensuring that expectations are clear and consistently applied. Addressing lateness promptly helps minimise disruption, supports classroom routines, and contributes to a positive learning environment for all.

Registers will be taken within the first 5 minutes of each lesson. Attendance to lessons after this time frame will be recorded on SIMs.



Appendix 3 – Absence Codes – Guidance for Schools – July 2025

Summary of Attendance Codes on current C2K system (Updated July 2025)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/ \	Present: / = (AM); \ =(PM)	S	Study Leave
A	Artistic Endeavour	U	Late (after registration closed)
B	Bereavement	V	Educational Visit / Examination
C	Suspended	W	Work Experience
D	No reason provided for absence	X	Only staff should attend
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Y	Exceptional Closure
H	Other Absence	#	Holiday for all
I1	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	!	No attendance required
I4	Illness – Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)
J	Extended Leave	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital
L	Late (before registration closed)	3	Elective Home Education
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	4	Pupil Referral Unit
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
O1	Other Exceptional Circumstances	6	Training Organisation (under EF)
O2	Temporary Exceptions to the Curriculum	7	FE College (under EF)
P	Approved Activity	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
R	Religious Observance	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support
Absence Category Colour Code			
Present / Approved Educational Activity	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Attendance not required