

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Are all pupils entitled to study leave?**

No. Study leave should **only** be granted, at the discretion of the school, for public examination candidates, in Years 11 to 14, during the examination timetable. This decision must be made by senior management and it is considered good practice to provide parents/carers with **a minimum of one weeks' notice** that study leave is being awarded to such pupils.

### **How should schools record the attendance of pupils on study leave?**

Study leave should be recorded using registration code S. Supervised study or revision classes provided in school should be coded Present / (am) or \ (pm). As above, study leave should **only** be granted to pupils, if appropriate, undertaking public examinations.

### **Can a school use a designated school day as a parent/teacher review day?**

No. Review days should not be used as part of the school day. Schools should endeavour to hold these reviews out of school hours. Under no circumstances should pupils be recorded as being on study leave during school hours under these circumstances.

### **Can a parent/carer take a child on holiday during term time?**

Principals should only authorise a holiday during term time in exceptional circumstances. As a rule, holidays during term time should be actively discouraged and recorded as unauthorised absence, if the Principal has not agreed to it. Likewise, if the Principal authorises a holiday, and the agreed duration is exceeded, the excess period should be recorded as unauthorised absence.

### **Why is 90% or above attendance only satisfactory. Surely that is good?**

Attendance at school is not an option. While there are valid reasons as to why pupils may be absent from school, parents/carers should always aim to achieve maximum attendance if possible. Every school day counts and a lost day is a lost learning opportunity.

**If a newcomer pupil returns to their country of origin during term time, what code should be used?**

Code O should be used if the Principal has approved and if not then Code H or G should be used depending on the reason for the absence. Please refer to Codes section for further information.

**A parent/carer has not provided any reason for a pupil's absence. How do I deal with this?**

Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence at the earliest possible stage. Contact mechanisms with parents/carers are crucial and an absence notification form has been developed which all schools should consider circulating to parents and encourage its use. The form can be accessed at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/absence-notification-form>

**What happens if I have to close my school on a designated school day?**

A school should contact the Department's Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team to apply in writing to take an exceptional closure day. Exceptional conditions mean that a school is closed due to an unavoidable cause, such as for example, extreme weather conditions. Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team can advise on the criteria in detail for an exceptional closure.

**When can I remove a child from the school register?**

You can remove a child from the school register only in the following circumstances: pupil is registered at another school in Northern Ireland; Pupil has departed from Northern Ireland; Expulsion; Death; Pupil leaves school after having completed his/her compulsory education; when a parent/carer advises that child is being removed under Regulation 6(2) of The Registration and Attendance of Pupils Regulations (NI) 1974 [No. 78], for example elective home education. The school has to complete an SA1 form:

[Form SA1 – Removal of a pupil from registration](#)

**A pupil is subject to Dual Registration, how should this be recorded?**

Dual Registration should be recorded in line with the codes provided in this Circular 2017/15. However, please refer to Circular Number 2016/22 'Guidance on the Enrolment Status of Pupils, including those subject to SEN and EOTAS Referrals, using Dual Registration at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201622-guidance-enrolment-status-pupils-including-those-subject-sen-and-eotas-referrals>

**A pupil in the school is pregnant. How should I record this pupil's attendance when they are off due to pregnancy sickness and also when they are off having the baby?**

When the girl is off sick it should be recorded as normal illness using Code I, providing you have been informed by the pupil's parent/carer that the pupil is ill.

When the girl is off due to having the baby then you would use Code O.

However, if at any time the girl is receiving home/hospital tuition arranged by the Education Authority then it would be Code 2.

**A pupil's parent/carer removes them from school when they are working in another country because the pupil travels with them. What should the pupil's absence be recorded as?**

When the parent/carer have advised that they are taking the child out specifically to go with them to the other country while they work then Code O should be used, once the school are content.

**A pupil has ongoing medical appointments. How should these be recorded?**

Code M should be used for a pupil's absence when the school have been notified that the child is attending a medical appointment.

If the pupil is in attendance at registration but has a medical appointment during either the AM/PM session then the pupil should be recorded as present.

If the pupil misses registration due to a medical appointment that the school has been made aware of in advance then Code M should be used, however if the pupil returns to school within that session then the Code should be change to present.

**A number of pupils cannot make it into school due to the failure of school transport or if the school is closed for part of the day. How should I record this?**

Code ! should be used for the pupils affected by failure of school transport and also if pupils are sent home due to such scenarios as adverse weather, electricity or heating failure.

**In the event of Industrial Action. How should I record this?**

Code ! should be used for the period the school is closed to pupils.

**Please note that the Frequently Asked Questions section will be regularly updated and it can be found on the Department's website at the following link:**

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools)