

Oxton St saviours



ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR ALL WIRRAL SCHOOLS

(Updated: September 2024)

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Any queries about attendance please contact

Name Mrs A Curran

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Introduction and Background

Oxton St Saviours recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. This is the definition of regular school attendance as decided by the Supreme Court in 2017.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the headteacher/principal, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Oxton St. Saviours school, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:

Mr A Ramsden

schooloffice@oxtonstsaviours.wirral.sch.uk

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Share attendance data with the Local Authority;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;

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- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance:
- Make home visits if and when necessary.
- Governors will also regularly monitor attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;

- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling (19 days) across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling (95 days) is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

Mrs A Curran

schooloffice@oxtonstsaviours.wirral.sch.uk

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.45am
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.45am
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice produced by the NHS

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

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If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be “missing from education.”

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child’s attendance is below 90%, and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with Mr Ramsden and Mrs Curran.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person’s role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Oxton St. Saviours School are:

Gates open: 8.45am

Registration starts: 8.45am

Registration closes: 9.00am

End of the school day: 3.15pm

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45am** when children can begin to come into school;

- Registers are taken by 9am.
- 9am to 9.10am is marked as L.
- Children arriving after **the gate is closed** are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carer they must sign them in and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded;
- At 9am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – ‘U’, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Mr Ramsden but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Under the DfE’s statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all pupils who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Local Authority attendance support services

Locality Attendance Officers, employed by the Local Authority, work strategically by offering support to schools, to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty

Notice issued within a three year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.”

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are “rare, significant, unavoidable and short”. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Oxton St. Saviours Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to provide school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the pupil and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education on a daily basis Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

CODE	MEANING	CRITERIA	STATISTICAL VALUE
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the session for which it is recorded The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

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		<p>the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>	
C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	<p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>No blanket approach</p> <p>School discretion</p> <p>Generally a need or desire for a holiday or tother absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance</p>	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	<p>Performance license issued by LA or Body of Persons</p> <p>Approval issued by LA or Justice of Peace has given license for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose</p>	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	<p>Exceptional circumstances</p> <p>If the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil</p>	Authorised absence

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		should temporarily be educated only part time temporary	
D	Dual registered at another school	The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code Code d may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are followed up promptly	Not a possible attendance (neither present nor absent)
E	Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday. A school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (Both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise	Authorised absence

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		parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	
J1	Leave of absence for interview	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with In session absence recorded	Authorised absence
K	Attending Education Provision arranged by LA	The nature of provision must be recorded. Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed	Attending (present)
M	Leave of absence for Medical or Dental Appointment	Agreement in advance Application by parent child normally lives with Minimum time necessary Where pupil is absent at registration	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Where absence is recorded as code N in the attendance register, the correct code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session. Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, school must amend the pupil's record to Code O	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one	Unauthorised absence

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		of the codes statistically classified as authorised	
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity. P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity.	<p>P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place of the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil for the purpose of facilitating the pupil's attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty (b) a local authority	Not possible attendance

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		<p>have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil and have failed to discharge that duty or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home.</p>	
R	Religious Observance	The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for studying for public examination		Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. 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 nature as to	Authorised absence

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		<p>require them to travel from place to place</p> <p>To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school</p>	
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	<p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All school are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.</p>	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an Educational Visit or trip	<p>The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip</p> <p>Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff</p>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending work experience	<p>W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity under arrangements by school or LA in the</p>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

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		<p>session for which it is recorded</p> <p>The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority</p> <p>The activity is of an educational nature</p> <p>The school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity</p> <p>The activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved</p>	
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	<p>For part time attendance</p> <p>Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X</p>	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is not able to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or Local Authority is not available	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel	Not a possible attendance

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		caused by a local national or international emergency	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Where a school was planned to be open for a session but the school is closed unexpectedly (eg due to adverse weather) the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are : In police detention Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing or Detained under a sentence of detention A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based part of a sentence of detention, referral order or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day	Not a possible attendance

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Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or Prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at the school does not , in itself mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause.	Not a possible attendance