



Attendance Primary: 21 July 2026 to 11 September 2026

The collection of attendance data for the 2025/2026 academic year

Technical completion notes

Date of issue: June 2026

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Attendance data collection: Primary 2025/26

- Audience** Headteachers, teachers and governing bodies of maintained schools, local authorities and national bodies with an interest in education.
- Overview** These technical completion notes are provided by the [Welsh Government](#) as guidance to support the above audience in complying with their statutory duties.
- Action required** Headteachers, teachers and governing bodies of maintained schools and local authorities must ensure that the requirements set out in this document are implemented in line with the dates specified.
- Further information** If you need further advice on the completion of any part of your attendance return, please contact your local authority in the first instance.

Enquiries about this document should be directed to:

Information Management Strategy
Data Collections Team
School Information Branch
The Education Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
Tel.: 0300 062 5014
E-mail: IMS@gov.wales



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- Additional copies** This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government website at gov.wales.

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



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1. Background

These notes are for the use of maintained primary and middle schools and local authorities in completing their electronic pupil level attendance return to the [Welsh Government](#) by **Friday 11 September 2026**.

Each local authority has its own deadline for receiving returns from schools, before sending them on to the [Welsh Government](#). **Schools should contact their local authority for details of this deadline.** Middle schools will be expected to complete both the secondary and primary attendance returns where applicable.

Data suggest a relationship between attendance and attainment. Schools with high attendance levels tend to have high levels of attainment at all key stages, but those with low attendance levels tend to have low attainment levels. The attendance register is therefore an important tool in the work of schools to drive up standards and pupils' attainment. It helps them to identify pupils who might need extra support to catch up lessons they have missed along with action to tackle poor attendance.

The [Welsh Government](#) is committed to securing better attendance in schools in Wales as part of its wider efforts to promote learning and raise educational attainment.

The most effective way of minimising the adverse effect that absence has on a pupil's attainment is to prevent all unnecessary absence and, where the absence is unavoidable, to help children catch up the work that they have missed. Schools have an important role to identify pupils who might need additional support or who have poor attendance records. In many cases they can address issues before they become serious, but there will be cases when they need the support of other agencies such as the local education welfare service. Further information on the promotion of positive behaviour and regular attendance can be found in the [Welsh Government's](#) guidance [Inclusion and Pupil Support – guidance circular 203/2016](#).

2. Introduction

All children and young people (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) who are receiving an education at the school during the normal school day must be placed on both the admission register and the attendance register.

An admission register records the personal details of every pupil at the school, and an attendance register records every pupil's attendance at every session the school is open to pupils. The admission register should include details of pupils from the date they are expected to attend the school.

The contents and maintenance of the school registers are governed by the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#).

'School roll' is a term that is often used to mean the pupils at the school and/or the number of pupils at the school. For the purposes of this guidance a 'school roll' consists of both the attendance and the admission register.

3. Technical completion notes

3.1 School day and school year

Schools are responsible for setting the hours of the school day as governed by the [Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2003](#). These state that the school day must be divided into two sessions with a break in the middle of the day. However schools which operate a six day week (i.e. Monday to Saturday) may have up to two days which only have one session.

The school year is defined in the [2003 regulations](#) as 'the period beginning with the first school term to begin after July and ending with the beginning of the first such term to begin after the following July'. In reality the school year operates from the start of September and ends at the end of August maintained schools must be open to all pupils for at least 380 sessions a year. If the school is unable to open for teaching pupils for 380 sessions and it is not reasonably practicable to make up the lost sessions, the school is to be treated that it has met the number of required sessions.

Activities outside the normal school day, such as breakfast clubs, homework clubs, detentions and extra-curricular activities should not be recorded in the statutory attendance register. People who only attend extended school activities should not be recorded in either the attendance or the admission register but schools may keep additional non-statutory registers to monitor these activities.

3.2 The attendance register

Attendance registers must be called twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Most schools call their afternoon registers at the beginning of the afternoon session, but some may do this at the end of the day. Schools doing the latter or who undertake lesson by lesson monitoring or take the register in an afternoon class should make sure that children are accounted for in an emergency and that a child who leaves the school premises at lunchtime would not go unnoticed.

The afternoon registration must take place at the start or during the afternoon session, not at the end of the morning session or during the break between the morning and afternoon sessions. 'Afternoon', in this instance, applies to the second session of the day. If the morning session runs past 12 noon it is not acceptable to take the afternoon register at the end of the morning session.

The register must show whether each pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, not required to attend, or absent. In addition, where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance; or that a satisfactory explanation has been given afterwards. Both morning and afternoon registers need to be up-to-date, so that schools can account for all their pupils, particularly in an emergency.

3.3 Safeguarding children's welfare

Pupils are absent for a variety of reasons which are personal to them and give no cause for concern. Some pupils' absence, whether single days, part of a pattern, or persistent, is an indicator of wider needs which must be addressed as part of the work to secure good attendance. It is vital that all staff and schools' local authorities are alert to this possibility and try to identify and address the underlying causes of pupil absence. Where appropriate, staff should refer pupils to other agencies and work with those agencies.

Further information can be found in the [Welsh Government's](#) statutory safeguarding in education guidance [Keeping Learners Safe](#).

The [Welsh Government](#) has also issued [statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education](#).

3.4 Data collection in context

The electronic attendance data collection means the data is provided as individual pupil records rather than as school totals.

The individual pupil records for the attendance return will be generated automatically by the school's management information system (MIS); it should not be possible for parts of the return to be edited manually.

It is essential for all relevant pupil data to be entered accurately into a school's system before the return is created.

A school's software may contain a series of 'data checks' which will help the school to identify and correct errors and inconsistencies in its data before generating its attendance return. School staff should go through this process carefully as it will substantially reduce the number of validation errors in the school's return and the work that staff may need to do subsequently to resolve these.

Unless otherwise stated, all data items described in the following sections are mandatory for the 2026 pupil level attendance return.

4. Data fields to be included in the attendance return

4.1 School identifiers

Local authority number	Consisting of three digits in the range 660-681
School number	Consisting of four digits, in the ranges 2000-3999, 5200-5299, 5500-5999
	It is essential for both these codes to be correct and up to date. Any error (including the provision of an old value of either code) is likely to lead to the rejection of your return by the Welsh Government .
School name	In full. The full official name of the school should be entered. Check here for the name currently held by the Welsh Government for your school. Amendments, authorised by the headteacher, should be sent to plasc@gov.wales with <i>School Address change</i> typed in the subject box.
	Your school name should match that contained in the 'Instrument of Government'.
School phase	The valid school phase code for primary schools is PS . The valid school phase code for middle schools is MS .

4.2 Survey details

Survey/data extraction type	The valid survey/data extraction type for primary schools is code ATP .
Survey reference date	Date of when the survey was completed in the format ccyymm-dd.
Person completing survey	Details of the person completing the survey e.g. HT Headteacher AC Acting headteachers DH Deputy Headteacher AS Assistant headteachers QT Other teacher AO Other administration staff BM School business manager or equivalent ON Other
Survey completion time	The number of hours spent by each person completing the return as an integer.

4.3 Individual pupil level data

Unique pupil number (UPN)	Must be a valid 13 character UPN. The software will check that no two (or more) pupils have the same UPN. Such errors should be resolved before the return is passed to the local authority. If they are still present when the return is passed to the Welsh Government then it will be rejected.
Former UPN	Used where the pupil has held another UPN while at the reporting school (for example where a temporary UPN was allocated when the pupil was first admitted but this was subsequently replaced by a permanent UPN retrieved from a previous school). If no such former UPN exists, this field should be left blank.
Surname	Full surname, as the school believes it to be.
Forename	In full, not shortened or familiar versions.
Middle name(s)	In full, not shortened or familiar versions. If the pupil has no middle name(s) then this field should be left blank.
Date of birth	In the format ccyymm-dd.
Sex	M (male) F (female)

4.4 Pupil status

Enrolment status	The enrolment status of the pupil. Valid values are: C Current (single registration) M Current main (dual registration) S Current subsidiary (dual registration) G Guest pupil There is no formal definition for a guest pupil and this code should not generally be used. Attendance data for individuals with a registration status of Guest should not be included in the attendance return.
Date of entry to current school	In the format ccyymm-dd.
Part-time indicator	1 (for true/yes) 0 (for false/no)

Part-time attendance is anything less than 10 sessions per week. The software should automatically insert a value of 'False' for all pupils.

Pupil national curriculum year group

The year group in which the pupil **is taught** for the majority of their time, regardless of their chronological age. The following values will apply to the majority of cases:

- N1** nursery, age less than 3
- N2** nursery, age greater than or equal to 3 but less than 4
- R** reception
- 1-7** year groups 1-7

Pupil post code

Please check that the information provided is compatible with one of the valid postcode formats, which are:

- An nAA
- AAn nAA
- AnA nAA
- Ann nAA
- AAAn nAA
- AAnn nAA

Where 'A' denotes an upper case letter and 'n' a number from 0 to 9. Common mistakes when recording postcodes are to confuse a letter with similar looking number (e.g. letter 'O' with the number zero), to omit the central space or to include a trailing full stop. Any of these will cause the postcode to be rejected as invalid.

The software should convert any 'O' at the start of the second postcode block to a 0 (zero), and convert double spaces between postcode blocks to single spaces.

An additional check has been added: for the second part of a postcode after the space (e.g. XXX **XXX**), the characters CIKMOV are now not allowed.

The expectation is that schools will be able to provide a valid home postcode for the great majority of their pupils. However in any individual cases where the whole postcode is not known, this field should be left blank.

4.5 Attendance data

Sessions possible	For each pupil on roll . This includes all the half day sessions that a school is open for pupils from 1 September 2025 up to and including Friday 20 July 2026 . A half-day session is either a morning or afternoon.
Sessions attended	This includes all the half day sessions a pupil has attended from the start of the academic year up to Friday 20 July 2026 .
Sessions authorised absence	The total should include all authorised absences which have been recorded for that pupil. An authorised absence is defined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 .
Sessions unauthorised absence	The total should include all unauthorised absences which have been recorded for that pupil. An unauthorised absence is any absence not authorised by the school.
Sessions not required to attend	Number of sessions where the pupil is not required to be in school. Sessions not required to attend must be less than or equal to sessions possible.
Attendance code	A list of all valid attendance codes used from 1 September 2025 up to and including Friday 20 July 2026 for each pupil. Codes X and Y will also be included although they relate to sessions not required to attend. N.B. codes X and Y have been removed from all percentage of possible sessions tables in the school summary reports.
Sessions count	Count of the number of half day sessions that each pupils' attendance codes were used. Sessions Count must be less than or equal to Sessions Possible.

4.6 Leavers' data

In addition to their attendance data, the following information for pupils who were on roll during the data collection period but who have now left is required:

Date of leaving	In the format ccy-mm-dd. Date pupil left the current school. For a permanently excluded pupil, the pupil date of leaving will be the day the pupil's name was removed from the school roll.
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Pupil data included in the return other than attendance data, should be taken as at the time of the last possible session for that pupil, within the reporting period (i.e. if the pupil has left, data such as their surname should be taken as at the day of their last possible session, and if the pupil is still on roll at the end of the

reporting period then this data should be taken as at the last session in the reporting period).

5. Who needs to be included in the attendance return?

All pupils of compulsory school age who are, or have been on roll, in the school during the period **1 September 2025** up to and including **20 July 2026**. This includes pupils on roll as at **20 July 2026** who were **aged 5 or older** as at **31 August 2025 (date of birth on or before 31 August 2020)**.

Data is required for **all pupils of statutory school age** who have been on roll during the reporting period and for whom registration status is C (Current – single registration), M (Main – dual registration) or S (Subsidiary – dual registration). Leavers within the academic year being reported on should also be included.

Pupils who are on roll for only part of the reporting period will be included in the return i.e. a pupil who left before the end of the reporting period or joined after the start of the academic year. These pupils will be counted within the school's attendance figures, but their attendance data will only be measured for the period where they were on roll at the school.

For more detailed guidance on the recording and reporting of information on pupils who are registered at more than one educational establishment, please refer to [annex A](#).

For **2026** attendance data from special and independent schools will be collected as in previous years, i.e. paper based, not at pupil level. Data for independent schools will be collected by the [Welsh Government](#) directly. Local authorities will be sent a separate form to give to their special schools that had pupils aged 5 to 10 as at 31 August 2025 on roll during the January 2026 PLASC, and will be asked to ensure that the data from these special schools are sent to the [Welsh Government](#) by the deadline.

Attendance data will not be collected from nurseries or pupil referral units.

Attendance data for pupils who are boarders should be returned in the same way as for all other pupils; a code is expected to be recorded against each possible session irrespective of whether the pupil is boarding.

6. When is the attendance data required?

Attendance data is required for the period covering the **academic year 2025/26 namely 1 September 2025 to 20 July 2026**. Schools must submit their completed returns to the [DEWi](#) system no later than **Friday 11 September 2026**.

Each local authority has its own deadline for receiving returns from schools so, before sending them on to the [Welsh Government](#). **Schools should contact their local authority for details of this deadline.**

7. How will the data be used?

Collecting data at an individual pupil level enhances the accuracy of data and enables more sophisticated matching and analysis of data. Attendance data will be used to generate statistical analyses of attendance levels in schools, local authorities and across Wales. It will be used in the [All Wales Core Data Sets](#) provided by the Welsh Government to each school and local authority, as well as to [Estyn](#), and published at a school level on [My Local School](#).

8. Use of attendance codes

To facilitate the consistent use in recording attendance information across Wales the [Welsh Government](#) introduced a standard set of attendance codes with [supporting guidance in 2010](#).

The use of fixed codes assists schools, local authorities and the [Welsh Government](#) in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

Attendance data is collected by the [Welsh Government](#) at individual code level.

A summary of the codes can be found in [annex B](#).

9. Validation and error correction

A school's software will provide a detailed report of validation errors and queries in its return. An error is defined as the presence of an illegal character or value in a data item, or a logical inconsistency between data items or between different aspects of the return. An error inevitably reflects some inaccuracy in or omission from the return.

Queries are of two kinds:

1. They may relate to an unusual feature of the data which suggests, but does not prove, the presence of some inaccuracy or omission;
2. They may be used as a prompt in areas where there seems a particularly high risk of errors or omissions occurring.

It is essential for schools to resolve as many errors as possible before submitting the return to the local authority, and ideally to resolve all of them. It is also essential to investigate all queries and to amend the data where it transpires that they are incorrect.

The [Welsh Government](#) will not reject outright any return, regardless of the number of errors, but would like to work with the school and the local authority to correct as many errors as possible.

Returns which, on arrival in the [Welsh Government](#), contain errors may have to be re-submitted. The [Welsh Government](#) will not be applying an overall threshold but will evaluate each return on its own merits. A local authority may apply an error threshold to the return it receives from a school and should check the details of that with them.

10. The school summary

The school summary is generated automatically by the software. Its purpose is to allow the staff preparing the return, and the headteacher authorising it, to assess the likely accuracy and completeness of the return, given that the return itself is too large to be viewed easily in its entirety. The summary presents the type of attendance as percentages of possible sessions for pupils on roll and leavers of compulsory school age only broken down by age, date of birth, sessions attended, authorised and unauthorised absences.

In addition a report will be available on [DEWi](#) which details the actual number of sessions.

The summary should be inspected carefully, paying particular attention to those parts that might reveal evidence that some individual pupil data were not entered into the system prior to generating the return. The [Welsh Government](#) does not require a copy of the summary but recommends that schools sign and retain a copy for their own records.

Codes X and Y have been removed from all percentage of possible sessions tables in the school summary reports.

11. Sending the return to the local authority

This pupil level information should only ever be sent via [DEWi](#). Personal data must never be emailed, which includes emailing pupils' UPNs.

Once the return has been authorised by the headteacher it should be sent via [DEWi](#), the online secure data transfer system, at the same time as the school summary is sent to the local authority. The mechanics of the transmission process will vary from one authority to another, so schools should contact their local authority for details.

Each local authority has its own deadline for receiving returns from schools, before sending them on to the [Welsh Government](#). **Schools should contact their local authority for details of this deadline.** The deadline for returns to reach the [Welsh Government](#) from local authorities is **Friday 11 September 2026**.

12. Further information

Schools should contact their local authority in the first instance for further advice on completing any part of the attendance return.

There is further information about the attendance return on the [Welsh Government website](#) including a frequently asked questions document which may help in answering some common queries.

If there are questions which cannot be resolved this way, please contact the [Welsh Government](#) by [e-mail](#) or telephone, using the [contact details](#) at the front of this document.

Annex A: Pupils who are registered at more than one educational establishment

A1. Dual-registered pupils

Background

The issue of dual registration has caused a number of queries to be raised in relation to:

- the recording of pupil data and registration status within school management information systems (MIS);
- the reporting of pupil data in PLASC;
- provision of end of key stage teacher assessment outcomes;
- inclusion of pupil data and external examination achievements in end of Key Stage 4 school statistics - the Summary of Secondary School Performance (SSSP);
- the provision of pupil attendance data; and
- funding.

This note explains the basis on which schools maintained by local authorities should record registration status information in their MIS and how the recording of this data will impact on the provision of assessment and other data and the calculation of statistics as outlined above.

Statutory requirements

[Section 434](#) of the [Education Act 1996](#) ('the Act') covers the registration of pupils. This section sets down the requirement for a register to be kept of specified information about all persons who are pupils at the school. It further provides for the National Assembly for Wales to make regulations specifying the basis on which registers can be inspected, the information to be recorded in the registers and the contents of the registers provided as part of periodic returns to the National Assembly, funding authorities or local authorities.

To decide who would need to be registered as a pupil at a school, we need to look at the following definitions in the [Act](#):

'Pupil' means a person for whom education is being provided at a school, unless that person is aged 19 or over and is being provided with further education or they are receiving part time education, suitable for any person over compulsory school age;

'Registered pupil', in relation to a school, means a person registered as a pupil at the school in the register kept under [section 434](#) of the [Act](#);

'Registered', in relation to the parents of pupils at a school or in relation to the names or addresses of such parents or pupils, means shown in that register; and

'School' is defined by the [Act](#) to mean an institution for providing primary and/or secondary education whether or not it also provides further education.

[Regulation 9](#) of the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#) sets out that a pupil can be dually registered at a school (not being a pupil referral unit) and a pupil referral unit; or at a mainstream school and a special school.

School management information systems

School MIS offers four categories for the recording of a pupil's registration status:

C Current (single registration)

Most pupils in most schools will be recorded as 'Current' for registration status.

Details for these pupils will be included in PLASC returns.

M Current Main (dual registration – main establishment)

S Current Subsidiary (dual registration – secondary establishment)

Where pupils are dually registered between a mainstream school and pupil referral unit or special school, both establishments should maintain a pupil record for the pupil. One establishment should record the pupil's registration status as Main and the other as Subsidiary.

In deciding which establishment is 'Main' or 'Subsidiary' a school should consider at which location the pupil is likely to spend the majority of their time during the academic year. For example:

- if a pupil spends a day a week at a special school or PRU then this should be their Subsidiary establishment;
- if a pupil is to attend a PRU full time for a limited period of perhaps a few weeks then return to the mainstream school the PRU would be the Subsidiary establishment; and
- If a pupil is intended to spend over half of the academic year at the special school or PRU then records should show the special school or PRU as the Main establishment.

Where a dually registered pupil has a registration status of Main at the maintained school then:

- details for these pupils will be included in PLASC returns from both Main and Subsidiary establishments;
- PLASC data from both establishments will be linked on receipt by the [Welsh Government](#); and

- data will feed into the RSG or the planning and funding system dependent on pupil age against the Main establishment.

G Guest Pupil

There is no formal definition for a guest pupil and this code should not generally be used.

Data for individuals with a registration status of Guest will not be included in the PLASC return, thus the information will not be included in formula calculations for RSG or the planning and funding system and no results information for such an individual would be included in the calculation of performance statistics.

In exceptional circumstances the code may be used where a school wishes to maintain a record for an individual over the age of 19 who is undertaking some activity on the school premises.

A2. Recording and reporting data on dual-registered pupils

Overview

Where pupils are registered in more than one educational establishment e.g. dual registration in a mainstream school and a special school or a pupil referral unit (PRU), both institutions should share responsibility for the pupil and should maintain a pupil record for that pupil. One establishment should record the pupil's registration status as 'Main' (M) and the other as 'Subsidiary' (S).

It is the responsibility of the 'Main' school to submit a complete attendance return for such pupils. This should include attendance data for the pupil for the times when they received their education at the Subsidiary establishment. **It should not automatically be assumed that the pupil is in attendance at the Subsidiary establishment until this has been confirmed to be the case.**

Schools may wish to put systems in place where attendance information from the Subsidiary establishment is fed back to them on a daily or weekly basis for input into their MIS.

In cases where the pupil's registration status is 'Main' at a special school or PRU and 'Subsidiary' at a mainstream school, it is still the responsibility of the mainstream school to submit a completed attendance return for that pupil for the whole academic year irrespective of whether their Main school was a special school or PRU.

Scenarios

A 'typical' dual registered pupil

For pupils who receive some of their educational provision at a PRU or special school either on a regular basis i.e. one or two days a week throughout the academic year or all their provision for a fixed period i.e. a school term before

they are reintegrated back into the mainstream school, the mainstream school should be treated as the 'Main' (M) establishment and the PRU or special school as the 'Subsidiary' (S) establishment for enrolment status purposes. The mainstream school is responsible for submitting the appropriate statutory returns. This school should also take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the PRU or special school to ensure the pupil is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons, the mainstream school should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner such as through 'First Day Calling' procedures.

If a pupil is excluded from the Main establishment but still attending the PRU, the Main establishment should record an authorised absence using code E. Even if the pupil attended a PRU or some other provision during the exclusion period, we would not want them recorded as 'present - attending other education provision'.

A dual registered pupil on roll at a mainstream school but who attends a PRU or special school most, if not all, of the time

When a pupil receives more than 50% of their education provision at a PRU or special school, for enrolment status purposes the PRU should be treated as the 'Main' (M) establishment and the mainstream school as the 'Subsidiary' (S) establishment. The mainstream school still has responsibility for submitting the pupil's statutory returns including the pupil's attendance information. The mainstream school should also take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the PRU or special school to ensure the pupil is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons the PRU or special school should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner such as through 'First Day Calling' procedures. The PRU or special school should provide the mainstream school with regular updates on the pupil's educational progress and attendance.

A dual registered pupil on roll at two mainstream schools

There are times when a pupil may be on roll at more than one mainstream school. For enrolment status purposes, the school where the pupil receives the majority of their provision should be treated as the 'Main' (M) establishment and the other school as the 'Subsidiary' (S) establishment. The 'Main' School should take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the other school to ensure the pupil is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons the 'Main' school should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner such as through 'First Day Calling' procedures. Each school should share the pupil's attendance information with each other to provide each school with a complete attendance record for the pupil.

In cases where a pupil is dually registered at two mainstream schools, their attendance data will be reported by both schools regardless of their enrolment status.

A pupil not on roll at any school who receives all their provision at a PRU

In certain circumstances, a child or young person is no longer on a school roll – because of permanent exclusion, for example. In this instance, the local authority is directly responsible for the child’s educational provision. For enrolment status purposes the PRU should be treated as the ‘Current’ establishment. For safeguarding and education reasons the PRU should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences and liaise with the local authority as appropriate.

Attendance data will not be collected from pupil referral units.

Off-site activities

Educational activities that take place outside the normal school day are not recorded in the statutory attendance register. Off-site activities which take place during the school day can be recorded as approved educational activity but only if the activities meet the legislative requirements and the school has received confirmation that the activity took place during the session in question.

Gypsy/Traveller children

Special circumstances apply where a pupil ‘has no fixed abode for the reason that his/her parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him/her to travel from place to place.’ In such cases, the pupil can be dual registered. The school where the pupil has attended when the parent is not travelling during the preceding 18 months is their ‘school of ordinary attendance’ - in practical terms this means the ‘school of ordinary attendance’ would record registration status as ‘Main’ (M) and the receiving school would record the pupil’s record with an enrolment status of ‘Subsidiary’ (S). Note that these pupils must also be recorded on the attendance register if they remain on the school admission register.

The school of Main attendance should take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the other educational provider to ensure the pupil is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons the responsibility for following up on unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner falls to each school during the time in which the pupil is in situ. Each school should then share the pupil’s attendance information with each other to provide each school with a complete attendance record for the pupil. Both schools will be responsible for submitting statutory returns for the pupil as required.

Where the school is aware that the pupil’s family is known to be travelling but does not know if the pupil is attending educational provision, the school should mark the absence of the pupil as an authorised absence. If the pupil is known to be absent for reasons other than travelling (e.g. illness, unexplained absence) the appropriate absence code should be used.

Managed/negotiated transfers

A pupil may be transferred to another school on a trial basis. In such a case, the original school will maintain the pupil's registration. If the receiving school decides to accept the pupil on a permanent basis then the registration will transfer at that time. However for the duration of the trial period it is recommended that the original school maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of 'Main' (M) and the receiving school maintains the pupil's record with an enrolment status of 'Subsidiary' (S).

Specialised units

In some local authority areas units may have been established to deliver specialised education services for pupils from schools in an extended area, not just in the school in which the unit is located. These units often provide special educational need support. In these circumstances it is recommended that the main registration school records the pupil with an enrolment status of 'Main' (M) and the school providing the specialist support records the pupil with an enrolment status of 'Subsidiary' (S).

Special school satellite classes

On certain occasions pupils who are registered at a special school are taught in classes located in a mainstream school's premises. Tuition is provided either wholly or partly by teachers from the special school. These classes are, effectively, satellite classes of the special school and should not be treated as classes of the mainstream school. It is recommended that the special school records the pupil's enrolment status as 'Current' (C). For health and safety purposes the maintained school may wish to record such pupils as a 'Guest' (G) within their Management Information System.

Purchased tuition

In some schools externally provided tuition may be purchased at another establishment for a registered pupil. In such circumstances it is important that the pupil is assigned correctly to the pupil's home school. It is recommended that the school co-ordinating the pupil's education records the pupil with an enrolment status of 'Main' (M) and the receiving school records the pupil's enrolment status as 'Subsidiary' (S).

If the provider is a commercial organisation, or an organisation outside the maintained school sector, then the pupil should be recorded with an enrolment status of 'Current' (C).

Annex B: Key to the 2026 attendance codes

The recommended codes are grouped under the following five statistical categories:

- present;
- approved educational activity (treated as present);
- authorised absence;
- unauthorised absence; and
- not required to attend.

Code	Meaning	Statistical category
A	Present at registration	present
L	Late but arrived before the register closed	present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	approved educational activity
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)	approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	approved educational activity
J	Interview	approved educational activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	approved educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	authorised absence
F	Agreed extended family holiday	authorised absence
H	Agreed family holiday	authorised absence
I	Illness	authorised absence
M	Medical or dental appointment	authorised absence
S	Study leave	authorised absence
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	authorised absence
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	authorised absence
N	No reason for the absence provided yet	unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	unauthorised absence
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)	unauthorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the register closed	unauthorised absence
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	not required to attend
Y	Partial and forced closure	not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on roll yet	not required to attend
#	School closed to all pupils	not required to attend

Annex C: Forced and partial closure of a school

C1. Use of code Y

If a school closes completely due to very bad weather, it is not required to take an attendance register.

We have introduced a new code which covers partial closure of schools. This would mean that in the case of pupils being prevented from attending due to the weather conditions, they would be recorded as not required to attend and their absence would therefore not affect the school's attendance for that day. The same code is used if a school remains open for at least some of its pupils but the weather conditions prevent other pupils from getting to school – for example, due to school buses not running.

Closed due to unavoidable cause

For the purposes of recording attendance and absence, 'official transport' is that arranged and funded by the school or local authority such as dedicated buses, taxis and public transport passes.

Examples where code Y may be used include:

- road conditions make some roads impassable with the result that the school bus or taxi can only collect some of the pupils;
- public transport not available to those issued with passes due to a major incident;
- burst boiler;
- floods; and
- damage.

This code should **not** be used for planned closures of the school site, such as bank holidays and INSET days. For planned closures of the school site Code # should still be used, even though it is no longer included as part of this data collection. It must **not** be used for pupils on part-time timetables or any form of exclusion. This mark should be used where the official transport is withdrawn by the school or local authority (or with its agreement). It should not be used:

- for pupils who 'miss the bus' and could use a later service thereby arriving late;
- when pupils' normal mode of transport is unavailable, such as being driven their by parents, but alternatives are available; or
- for pupils who normally walk to school, unless doing so during extreme weather conditions is deemed to put their health at risk.

Where the whole school is forced to close in exceptional circumstances, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of a 'system wide' entry for the whole school and applying the enforced closure to all pupils in the school.

Where only part of the school is forced to close in exceptional circumstances, e.g. one site housing two year groups or classes, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of selecting the year groups or classes and applying the partial enforced closure to all pupils in the year group or class.

Where the enforced closure relates to pupils following a failure of school/local authority provided transport, this can be recorded in electronic attendance recording systems by way of selecting the pupils as a group and applying the partial enforced closure to all pupils in that group.

C2. Different term dates for different pupils

The [Education \(School Day and School Year\) Regulations \(Wales\) 2000](#) require schools to be open to each compulsory school-age pupil for 380 sessions a year but schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups. Where they do this, schools can use Code Y to record that a year group is not due to attend. Schools and local authorities can use the attendance register to monitor the offer made to pupils because there must be at least 380 session recorded using codes / \ or B to W for each pupil who is registered at the school for the whole year.