**Important Changes to Attendance Codes - Do Not Ignore**

**fao admin staff/headteachers/technical staff**

Attendance codes are changing from the 1 August 2024 so this will come into effect for the new academic year 2024/2025 for most schools in Suffolk.

**At present, this is the list of codes that a school will use until then:**

|  |  |  |
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| **Code** | **SIMS Description** | **DfE Description / Explanation** |
| / | Present (AM) | Present (AM) |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present (PM) |
| B | Educational off site (not dual registered) | Approved education activity as pupil is being educated off site (Not dual registration) |
| C | Other authorised circumstances | Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances |
| D | Dual registration | Dual registered (at another establishment) – not counted in possible attendances |
| E | Excluded | Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made |
| G | Family holiday (not agreed) | Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday |
| H | Family Holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday |
| I | Illness | Unable to attend because of sickness |
| J | Interview | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendances |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Late (before the register closed) marked as present |
| M | Medical or dental appointment | Authorised absence due to medical or dental appointment |
| N | No reason provided for absence | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has yet been provided |
| O | Unauthorised absence | Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description |
| P | Approved sports activity | Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence due to religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence due to study leave |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence due to traveller absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience | Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence | Non-compulsory school age absence – not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not on roll | Pupil not yet on roll – not counted in possible attendances |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure | Planned whole or partial school closure – not counted in possible attendances |

**This is a list of attendance codes that come into effect in the next academic year for all schools:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **SIMS Description** | **DfE Description / Explanation** |
| / | Present (AM) | Present for school morning session |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present for school afternoon session |
| B | Attending any other Approved Education Activity | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| C | Other authorised circumstances | Leave absence for exceptional circumstance |
| C1 | Leave of absence – regulated performance | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. |
| C2 | Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| D | Dual registered | Dual registered to another school |
| E | Suspended or excluded without alternative provision | Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision |
| I | Illness | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) |
| J1 | Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| K | Alternative provision provided by LA | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Late arrival before the register closed |
| M | Medical or dental appointment | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Reason absence not yet established |
| O | Absence in other or unknown circumstance | Absence in other or unknown circumstance |
| P | Participating in sports activity | Participating in sports activity |
| Q | Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements | Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements |
| R | Religious observance | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave for public examination | Study leave for public examination |
| T | Traveling with parent for occupational purposes | Traveling with parent for occupational purposes |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Late (after registers closed) |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Attending an educational visit or trip |
| W | Attending work experience | Attending work experience |
| X | Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil | Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil |
| Y1 | Unable to attend – Transport not available | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided |
| Y2 | Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| Y3 | Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure | Unable to attend due to the whole schools’ site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend – criminal justice detention | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. |
| Z | Pupil not on roll | Prospective pupil not on admission requester |
| # | Planned whole school closure | Planned whole school closure |

**Some Codes have been retired and will no longer be available to use in the next academic year:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **SIMS Description** | **DfE Description / Explanation** |
| H | Family Holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday. |
| J | Interview | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance |
| Y | Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendance |

**This is a list of the new codes that come into effect in the next academic year:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **SIMS Description** | **DfE Description / Explanation** |
| C1 | Leave of absence – regulated performance | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. |
| C2 | Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable | Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable |
| J1 | Leave of absence - Interview | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution |
| K | Alternative provision provided by LA | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| Q | Unable to attend – lack of LA access arrangements | Unable to attend the school because of lack of access |
| Y1 | Unable to attend – Transport not available | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided |
| Y2 | Unable to attend – Widespread travel emergency | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| Y3 | Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure | Unable to attend due to the whole schools site being unexpectedly closed |
| Y5 | Unable to attend – Detention sentence | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law | Unable to attend in accordance with Public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. |

**This is a list of codes where a reason will be required with the attendance code:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **SIMS Description** | **DfE Description / Explanation** |
| B | Educated off-site (not Dual-Reg) | Attending any other approved educational facility. |
| K | Alternative provision provided by the LA | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority |
| Y7 | Unable to attend – Unavoidable other than Y1-Y6 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. |

To put in a reason, you would have to first put in the code, then come back to the code and right click on it to add a reason. A reason is not a note, when a reason has been given, it will be a different colour marker to a note and will be in a different corner of the attendance mark.

These changes have come down from Westminster, the DfE have advised the various MIS companies of these changes and when they come into effect.

Please be aware that some attendance codes will have two characters, for instance, “unable to attend” has seven variants, of which Y7 would require a reason.

Obviously, this is going to change the errors and solutions for the next census. We are unable to provide a definitive list now for the Autumn census. However, as these codes come into effect a month before the first census of that academic year it would be a good idea to ensure that the correct code is used. If a reason is required, it would be better to provide this reason rather than work this all out on census day.

The changes to sims software to enable this change in attendance codes will be provided by the summer upgrade. This upgrade normally becomes available at the end of June.

If a school fails to upgrade before the academic year 2024/2025 start, then they will be unable to provide the correct code in some instances. Previously, some schools have left the upgrades until the week before census week and in some instances have left it until census week. I would strongly recommend that all schools get their upgrade completed before the end of this academic year, at the very latest, to get the upgrade completed during the summer break.

Failure to upgrade means that the attendance codes could be incorrect/invalid, which would lead to redoing attendance for the entire school where codes have been retired and codes have broken up to two-digit codes. Furthermore, some codes like the B code will require a reason which cannot be provided if sims were not upgraded.

[Example from ESS on multi character attendance (MCA)](https://parentpaygroup.service-now.com/csm?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0055067&sys_kb_id=054e679cc33e4a18718b991c050131d9&spa=1)

Additionally, any attendance marks should not be added in advance. Attendance should only be taken in this instance once the upgrade has been successful, and the academic year has started. This is due to the retiring of some codes and new codes being implements on the start of the academic year. For instance, if you were going to add a H code for family holiday agreed, this code is being retired so would be invalid in September. There is no replacement for this code, this could leave the school in a position where there are only poor choices to put as an alternative.

The Autumn census is the most important census, as this is the one where the school generates the most funding from. I therefore expect a lot of traffic on census helpline during census week regarding the attendance changes. Your patience and understanding on that week would be greatly appreciated.

If you require further information or assistance, please log a call with the IT Service Desk by phone on 01473 265555 or by email to [ITServicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ITServicedesk@suffolk.gov.uk)