Meadow Park

Patience, Guidance and Determination

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy lead:	**Headteacher**
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1. Introduction

Meadow Park School believes that good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents/carers.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas have – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as Pupil Premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Fostering a whole school approach to improving attendance &celebrating good attendance
- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies
- Ensuring parents/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents/carers and pupils
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

2. School Attendance Team

Email	attendance@meadowparkknowsley.co.uk
Telephone	0151 477 8959

Staff, parents/carers and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance team for queries or concerns about attendance.

3. Timings of the School Day

We expect parents/carers to ensure their child attends school on time, every day.

Times are outlined below:

	School day	Enrichment activities
Acorns	8:50am – 2pm	2pm-3pm
Key Stage 2	8:50am – 2pm	2pm-3pm
Key Stage 3	9:50am – 3pm	8:50am-9:50am
Key Stage 4	9:50am – 3pm	8:50am-9:50am

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors and Headteacher

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.
- Making wellbeing phone calls when pupils from their tutor are absent.
- Developing positive and trusting relationships with pupils and parent/carers.

The attendance lead and team are responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.

- Communicating with pupils and parents/carers with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent absenteeism.
- Informing the local authority of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Reporting Elective Home Education.
- Reporting Child Missing Education.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Arriving punctually to school and lessons each day.

5. Attendance Expectations

Meadow Park School has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents/carers and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson punctually.

Primary registers will be complete by 9:30am, Secondary by 10:30am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
Primary registers will close at 10am, Secondary at 11am. Pupils arriving after this time without prior arrangement will receive a U code (unauthorised absence).

All afternoon registers will be marked by 12:40pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

Secondary class teachers will take registers at the start of each lesson period to ensure that pupils are attending all timetabled lessons. These registers will be analysed alongside formal registers in line with the section of this policy.

Pupils will be encouraged to communicate any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to the relevant member of staff.

6. Absence Procedures

Parents/carers are required to contact the Attendance Team via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g., one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the

parent/carer via text then a telephone call, as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than 3 school days in a row, or more than 10 school days in one term, the pupil's parent/carer will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or if it is a long absence.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to the attendance team. The school will inform the Local Authority, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the attendance lead will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent/carer.

If school is unable to establish the whereabouts of a pupil after making reasonable enquiries, school will refer the pupil to the Local Authority Child Missing Education Team.

7. Attendance Register

The school uses SIMs to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day, the start of the afternoon session, and at the start of each lesson in secondary.

When the school has planned to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g., induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

8. Authorising Parental/Carer Absence Requests

Parents/carers will be required to request planned absence in advance, in writing providing dates and the reason for the absence request. All requests for absence will be considered by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents/carers.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

9. Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents/Carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

10. Performances and Activities, Including Paid Work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the local authority which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education. These arrangements will be approved by the local authority who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of 3 hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the local authority issuing the licence.

This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than 6 hours a week; and
- During each complete period of 4 weeks (or if there is a period of less than 4 weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than 3 hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the local authority; and
- For not more than 5 hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the local authority and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the Local Authority, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The Headteacher may not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 %. Where a licence has

not been obtained, the Headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

11. Religious Observance

Parents/carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance in advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents/carers for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

12. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

13. SEND- and Health-related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Education Health Care Plans or Individual Healthcare Plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help support attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the Designated Safeguard Lead and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the local authority if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the local authority with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.

- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.
- Consider a personalised timetable.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal or there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating an action/support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a personalised timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to go when required.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one support in lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

14. Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a pupil is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the local authority or parent is not available and the pupil's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
- The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

The use of the 'Y' code for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

15. Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out using the Inventry system, and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and the office will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents/carers of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

16. Missing Children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school or parent/carers. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform leadership immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - Changing rooms
    - Social spaces
    - Any outbuildings
    - The school grounds
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents/carers of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's form tutor will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The school will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, or hide within school, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

The school will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

17. Attendance Intervention

Stage One	
Day 1	You will receive a text message informing you of your child's absence requesting a response. If this is unsuccessful, a phone call will be made.
Day 2	School will email via IRIS/text/phone to ascertain reason for absence and if support is required. A member of their class teaching or pastoral team will make contact to address any barriers to attendance.
Day 3-4	If there has still not been contact from parent/carers and the absence continues, school will undertake a home visit to establish why the child is not in school. School may send an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) Warning Letter – this letter advises that if the absence continues, an EPN may be requested and sent to the parent/carer. Outside support agencies may also be contacted to support in the pupils attendance.
Day 5	Invite parent/carer into a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team.
Termly	Thorough analysis and evaluation of individual and departmental attendance. Written action plans with strategies for improvements. Attendance clinics with Governors.
Stage Two	
A referral to School Attendance Service is made for those children identified as causing concern at Stage 1, and the School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will work this case on a 6-week time scale, or longer if required. This will include, however is not limited to: phone calls, home visits, letters, meetings and targets being set to improve attendance. Other agencies are involved as appropriate to support the family.	
Stage Three	
If attendance concerns continue, following the planned intervention by all relevant agencies, the case may escalate to Statutory Action e.g., Section 444 of The Education Act 1996, proceedings and/or consideration of an Education Supervision Order. This may result in a fine of up to £120.00 to be paid within 28 days for each parent/carer, if not paid within 28 days each parent maybe prosecuted and a fine up to £2.500 and/or a custodial sentence of 3 months if found guilty. The parent/carer may also have a criminal record if found guilty.	

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance team will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters, texts or emails to parents/carers.
    - Having a weekly tutor review.
    - Engaging with the Local Authority attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Creating attendance action plans.
    -

The school will use attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will aim to improve attendance in the overall school cohort by acknowledging good attendance in the following ways:

- Rewards
- Certificates
- Postcards home
- Referral for reintegration

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g., by setting individualised targets.

Working with Parents/Carers to Improve Attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and families and to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g., social care.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g., SEN need, the attendance officer will work with any relevant school staff, e.g., the Designated Safeguard Lead and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g., they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance team will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g., children's social care or the local authority, and will encourage parents/carers to access support that they may need.

18. Persistent Absenteeism

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of persistent absence to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an Education Health Care Plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a pupil at risk of persistent absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe persistent absence following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

19. Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The attendance lead will monitor and analyse attendance data daily to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, Child Looked After and pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence.

The attendance lead will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance lead will provide weekly reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the school in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

20. Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents/carers and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the Local Authority to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the Headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the Local Authority's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the Local Authority to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

21. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'

22. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is Spring 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

23. Additional Information

Authorised Absence	Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences'.

Unauthorised Absence	There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as 'unauthorised absences'.
Persistent Absence (PA)	A child is classed as a persistent absentee when they miss 10%> schooling across the school year. This could be authorised, unauthorised or both.
Education Penalty Notice Warning	The school can issue an Education Penalty Notice Warning letter, which can be issued after 6 unauthorised sessions of absence (3 days) for an individual child. These can be consecutive absences, broken weeks or arriving late after registration has closed.
Education Penalty Notice (EPN)	An Education Penalty Notice can be issued after 14 unauthorised sessions of absence for an individual child, during a 10-week period (7 days). These unauthorised absences can be made up consecutive absences, broken weeks (odd days off) or late-after registration has closed.
Children Missing Education (CME)	Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children cannot be taken off our school roll until there is confirmation of their start date in the destination school. Failure to receive confirmation of a forwarding school will result in a child being classed as a Child Missing Education. All schools have a duty to inform the Local Authority of their missing status. The Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations under Safeguarding Procedures.

24. Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Child is on a work experience placement

Authorised Absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Suspension (Previously exclusion)	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 child is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Child from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Y	Exceptional circumstances	Child is absent due to exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised Absence

G	Unauthorised holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Child is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for child's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at school after the register closed