

Schools Data Team

Additional Notes – Attendance recording

For: All Schools

Attendance Recording

Primary, middle-deemed primary, middle-deemed secondary, secondary, all-through, special and PRU/AP schools need to send this information.

The termly report by all schools on attendance – excluding nursery schools, which are not required to submit any attendance data via the school census, even where they have pupils aged 4 or 5.

Information for a pupil's attendance during the term preceding the census is collected termly. This may include information for pupils who left the school prior to census day.

- for the January 2026 census, aged 4 to 15 as at 31/08/2025 where their date of birth falls between 01/09/2009 and 31/08/2021
- on the school roll for at least one session during the specified term

Attendance data is only required for non-boarder pupils (where pupil boarder indicator is equal to 'N').

Collection periods

The period covered by the termly attendance module is from the start of the autumn term (from 1 August) up to, and including, the Sunday before the usual late spring bank holiday.

Collection periods

For the January 2026 collection, the school Census collects the attendance data from 01/08/2025 – 31/12/2025.

From January 2026, schools must keep the attendance register electronically and use the national attendance and absence codes.

Schools are not obliged to use individual attendance codes therefore, there are 2 options with regards to how attendance and absence data should be returned.

- **For those schools using an electronic attendance package integrated within their main MIS**, the census extracts the relevant data for each pupil for each attendance period (term or half term).
- **For schools not using an integrated attendance package** (or record attendances in paper registers), extract the relevant data for each pupil included in the census, according to the dates for the appropriate attendance period, and manually add this data to the census return. In this case, absence and attendance reporting by reason is not required and schools report on the number of authorised and unauthorised absences for each pupil.

Schools should seek advice from the supplier of their main MIS on how to add data manually for the census return.