

South East Essex Academy Trust



School Attendance Policy

Title	School Attendance Policy 2023
Author	Caroline Thornton
Owner	Trust Board
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The Deanes

Please find below information relating specifically to The Deanes

School Start Time	8.30am
Morning Registration Closing Time	9.30am
Afternoon Registration Closing Time	12.30pm
First Day Calling	We will telephone or text on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from parents/carers. If we are unable to make contact with parents / carers by telephone, we may telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding.
Reporting Absence Procedures	Reporting by email: absence@thedeanes.essex.sch.uk Reporting by telephone: 01268 773545, press 1 to report the absence Please report absence before 9am. Absence must be reported each day of absence
Requesting Leave of Absence Procedures	The Leave of absence form can be found on our website: The Deanes School - Attendance
Who to contact if you have a concern about your child, or young person's attendance.	Your child's form tutor via the contact form https://forms.gle/4bZo2y4owa9ZfyNJA
Our school observes the Essex County Council procedures for managing school attendance.	Please refer to Annex A
Attendance support commissioned from Aquinas	Aquinas Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties are not resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to Aquinas. Aquinas works alongside the school's internal attendance team to help the school promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, and to act early to address patterns of absence. They conduct weekly attendance reviews for all pupils, identify individual concerns and recommend the appropriate action. The process of intervention implemented by Aquinas is solely designed to overcome any identified barrier to a student's school attendance without the need for legal action. The process is primarily aimed to work with pupils and parents to firstly inform them of the concern, then engage with them to identify and

	<p>resolve any barriers affecting attendance. It is only where all support-centred measures have failed to make an impact and the unauthorised absences continue, that legal action in the form of penalty notice will be considered. Aquinas is a member of the National Association of Social Workers in Education (NASWE), and is accredited by Essex Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) with the power to issue penalty notices.</p>
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1. Introduction

South East Essex Academy Trust (SEEAT) Statement on Attendance

The Trust recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child and young person the best education experience possible. There is a strong correlation between good attendance and achievement. Every lesson in school matters and absence can limit a pupil's progress, and therefore their life chances. If pupils are not in school, they cannot be educated.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: [Working together to improve school attendance](#). Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

The policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our Trust ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Promote good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Support the individual needs of the pupils
- Ensure a high-quality curriculum and stimulating teaching which encourages pupils to attend school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school
- Manage attendance issues with an emphasis on early intervention and referral to external support as required.

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

Any absence affects the pattern of a pupils schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility; **permitting absence from school without a good reason is a criminal offence, as defined by the Education act (1996).**

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

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

2. Statutory Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) and [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for schools and the trust
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

3.4 The attendance lead or officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with partner agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Follow the school's procedures for first day calling. Be prepared to be assertive. Avoid any sense of collusion with parents over unnecessary absence
- Issue attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the effect intended. Do not tolerate a lack of response. Seek advice when you need it
- Hold regular discussions with the headteacher and the Trust Inclusion Manger

- Advise the headteacher of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly. Registers are legal documents and must be kept carefully and accurately
- Inform the Head teacher about families where unhelpful habits are forming
- Make sure action is taken to break unhelpful habits at the earliest opportunity
- Check and file all absence notifications that are received and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.

3.5 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily and accurately using the correct codes
- Promoting regular attendance through rewards and encouragement
- Ensure the Head teacher or Attendance Lead is informed of concerns over attendance
- Review and understand attendance data
- Connect with parents/ guardians who have regular absence, or patterns of irregular attendance
- Following absence, do your best to provide catch-up opportunities so absentees do not fall behind
- Pass on information to the school attendance officer if you have concerns, or new information about a pupil's absence
- Assist the attendance lead to identify barriers to attendance and punctuality.

4. Promoting Regular Attendance

We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our Trust's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on improving attendance on our schools will:

- Regularly feature attendance and lateness matters in our newsletters and on the school websites
- Report to parents/carers on their child's attendance with their termly school report
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target of 95%
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance
- Provide support to pupils and their families to identify and reduce barriers to good attendance
- Engage pupils in an ethos of attending and learning
- Use a holistic or 'team around the child' approach to raise and resolve issues relating to attendance and lateness positively
- Support, and welcome back pupils following a period of absence
- Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be integrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme
- Respond to requests for support and assistance
- Follow the clear staged process for identifying and tackling attendance, undertaken by the Trust, the school's internal attendance support, the Local Authority, and in some circumstances by commissioned attendance support.

To help children and young people attend school regularly, parents and guardians can:

- Ask school for support or report concerns you have
- Respond to school texts, phone calls and letters regarding your child's attendance and lateness
- Make appointments out of school hours wherever possible and keep appointments cards, letters and prescription details; you may be asked to provide these as evidence of your child's absence

- Keep up-to-date with non-pupil, term and holidays dates through the school website and newsletters; do not rely on word of mouth or social media. It is your responsibility to ring and check if you are unsure
- Communicate with the school about any absence and lateness relating to your child
- Be aware of the strong link between attendance and your child's overall attainment

Our school's work in partnership with a broad spectrum of external partners, including the relevant local authority, private sector support, charitable organisations, the NHS and public health to support, and improve attendance and punctuality. However, there are occasions when it becomes necessary for statutory attendance services to become involved, because concerns continue despite evidence that the school has made every effort to bring about improvement.

5. Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school needs to be classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. **It is only the school who can authorise an absence and not parents/guardians**. It is for this reason that information about the cause of any absence is always required. This enables the school to make an informed decision about whether a pupil's absence from school should be authorised. Each half-day is known as a session.

5.1 Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons when your child is away from school for a good reason, for example, illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Minor illnesses, such as **coughs, colds, sore throats, headache, stomach ache, period pains and other such minor ailments are not considered to necessitate absence from school, and these reasons will not be routinely authorised**. Please refer to the NHS website for further guidance at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> <https://sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/parentscarers/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool>

5.2 Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no **'leave'** has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings which may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If you are found guilty in court, you will receive a criminal conviction.

Although not an exhaustive list, unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents and carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illnesses or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark on the attendance register before its closure.
- Shopping or day trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to appointments
- Birthdays – their own or someone else's
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher- may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- Not being properly equipped with uniform, shoes or other equipment needed for the school day
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed
- The child being absent because a parent, carer or other family member is unwell

5.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and evidence can be provided of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The school must be notified of any unavoidable appointments in advance.

5.4 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence. Please refer to page 1 for school specific information.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised if the illness is deemed to necessitate absence from school.

Schools will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence particularly if a child is persistently absent or the school doubts the authenticity of the illness. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

5.5 Religious observance and absence

We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside the school holiday periods and will necessitate a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. It is reasonable for a parent, or guardian to request leave of absence for their child on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent, or guardian's religious body, and if the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which they belong.

Parents/Carers are requested to give 2 weeks' advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent and follow the individual school's request for absence procedures.

5.6 Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss '**10% or more schooling**' across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents, and guardians fullest support and cooperation to resolve this.

Our schools will monitor thoroughly all absences and the reasons that are given. If a child has reached, or is at risk of moving towards **90%**, we will inform the parent/carer. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All pupils in this group and their parents may be subject to a school-based meeting to agree an action plan. This may include allocation of additional support through the agencies mentioned previously. We may also use mentoring, individual incentive programmes, individual targets, and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance.

Parents and guardians are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. Local Authority Officers work with schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (**see Annex 'A' for the Essex County Council Code of Conduct and Annex 'B' for the Southend City Council Code of Conduct**).

The Local Authority can also use court proceedings to seek an **Education Supervision Order** to be placed on the child. During these court proceedings, the magistrates may consider issuing a **Parenting Order**, which could include parents attending mandatory parenting skills sessions.

6. Lateness and Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and not spend valuable time with their teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt the lesson for others, this can be embarrassing for the child and this, in turn promotes absence.

Good timekeeping is an essential life skill which will help pupils as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

Pupils should be in school for morning and afternoon registration, and for our secondary students their individual lesson registrations. Pupils arriving late will be marked with an '**L**' code and expected to provide a legitimate reason for their lateness. In the case of our primary pupils, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardian to provide a reason. All reasons for lateness are recorded. Parents or guardians will be contacted by the school about persistent lateness and expected to attend a meeting to discuss a solution. From time to time a representative from the school,

the Trust or the Local Authority may undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school and recording reasons for lateness.

After the registers close, and in accordance with the regulations, your child will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer and any other professionals deemed appropriate by the school.

Remember you can approach any of our schools, at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

7. School Attendance and the Law

There is no legal entitlement for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is *"in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."*

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances", and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this Trust that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice will be requested by this school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Throughout the Trust '**exceptional circumstances**' will be interpreted as:

- *being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.*

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- At any time in September. This is particularly important as your child needs to settle into their new classes as quickly as possible
- During assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

The fundamental principles for defining '**exceptional**' are events that are "**rare, significant, unavoidable and short**". By '**unavoidable**' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Unauthorised absence also includes any days off without a satisfactory reason or explanation. Where unauthorised absence is persistent and exceeds the number of unauthorised absences defined in the local authority Code of Conduct, a Penalty Notice can be issued. **Please see Annex A for the ECC (Essex County Council) and Annex B for the SCC Codes of Conduct.**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend for other reasons. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We take a fast-track approach to dealing with attendance issues, promoting early intervention and prompt referral to external agencies, which may include:

- The School Nursing Team
- Early Help and Family Support Team
- Family Support Worker
- EWMHS/ CAMHS
- Local Authority Attendance Compliance Team (Essex County Council)
- School Attendance, Access & Inclusion School Attendance Team (Southend City Council)
- Aquinas (for those schools who commission an external provider for attendance Support)
- Education Access

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointment that necessitates absence from school
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’/carers’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

NB: This list is not exhaustive. Individual schools may have access to external agencies and support, unique to their locations.

7.1 Local Code of Conduct & Penalty Notice

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 clearly states that if a child of compulsory school age ‘**fails to attend regularly**’ at the school where the child is registered, the parent is committing an offence.

Designated school staff can request the issue of a Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution.

Penalty Notices may be issued where there has been unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, whereby a parent made an application to the school which the Head Teacher has deemed not for exceptional circumstances. In addition, a Penalty Notice may also be issued, whereby the parent did not submit a leave of absence request, however the school have reason to believe the absence was for the purpose of a holiday and should not be authorised as the parent has not provided any additional evidence which the headteacher deems appropriate to support the absence. In addition to the above criteria, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have unauthorised absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday. Penalty Notices may also be issued where school attendance is irregular if there has been unauthorised absence during the previous 10 school weeks.

The details are specified in the attached Codes of Conduct. Your child's school will observe the Code of Conduct for their area.

The school may apply for a **Penalty Notice** to be issued when a child is absent from school without authorisation, the circumstances may include:

- Absence taken during term time (holiday, short breaks, events, trips and other occasions)
- Truancy
- An accumulation of unauthorised sessions without a satisfactory reason or explanation

For further information see Annex ‘A’ for the Essex County Council Code of Conduct and Annex ‘B’ for the Southend City Council Code of Conduct.

8. Registration Procedures and Expected Practise

A register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording either a present or absence mark, or the appropriate code to identify pupil attendance each day. The schools use statutory registration codes to indicate which pupils are late, present or absent, and whether any absences are authorised or unauthorised.

The Trust complies with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 by taking a register at the start of the morning session, and again at the commencement of the afternoon session.

Registers are carefully monitored, and pupils who have not registered are identified, and the matter is investigated. Our attendance officers will follow first-day calling procedures as a matter of routine, to identify pupil whereabouts, and the reasons for non-attendance.

First day calling is carried out in-line with the individual school's process. Safeguarding pupils is our priority and every effort will be made to locate pupils who are absent without notice, by contacting all known contacts by phone, text, email and any other school communication system to establish the pupil's whereabouts.

If pupils are identified as vulnerable, are known to have an allocated social worker, are subject to a Child in Need Plan, a Child protection Plan, or are in the care of the Local Authority we will prioritise identifying their whereabouts and notify the allocated worker at the Local authority.

The registration of every pupil is recorded and stored on the school's computer system.

8.1 Absence Procedures

If your child is absent from school the parent or carer must follow the procedure below:

- Contact the child's school on the first day of absence providing specific information including their name, class or tutor group, and a detailed reason for absence. Generic comments such as ill, unwell, under the weather, poorly or off-colour are not specific and will lead to an unauthorised absence.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence unless you have provided evidence of your child's absence which is date specific, for example a hospital discharge letter or written advice from a medical professional
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible

If your child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text the parent or guardian on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If you fail to respond the school will contact all other emergency contacts provided by you, until we are satisfied your child is safe, and absent for good reason
- Write to or e-mail you if your child's absence drops below 95%
- If absence deteriorates to 90% or below you will be required to attend a meeting to discuss the situation with the schools Attendance Officer and any other professionals deemed appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority and request formal School Attendance support if absence and punctuality continue being a concern despite intervention and support from the school
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Send you a letter warning of a Penalty Notice from the local authority if absence is persistently unauthorised

Note:

Failure to contact the school, or respond to our calls and other forms of communication regarding absence may trigger a home visit from school staff, or a local authority representative, the Police or even social care. As a school we have a duty of care to our pupils which includes knowing they are safe if they do not arrive at school.

We never assume that a child is at home unwell, until we have been provided with a reason for the absence, or absence has been requested in advance.

8.2 The table below explains the most used attendance codes you are likely to see on pupil's attendance certificate:

Code	Meaning	Meaning
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off-site (NOT Dual Registration)	Pupil is supervised at an off-site educational activity approved by the school.

C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another code/ description)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual Registration – pupil is attending another educational establishment where they are also registered.	Not expected to attend The Deanes, but are expected to attend identified alternative school
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
N	Absent – no reason yet given	Unauthorised
F	Extended Family Holiday (Agreed)	Authorised
G	Holiday (NOT agreed, or days in excess of those agreed)	Unauthorised. <i>This code counts as an unauthorised absence and affects your child's overall percentage. The school may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice for unauthorised leave of absence.</i>
I	Illness (NOT medical, dental or other appointments)	Authorised. <i>If children are genuinely unwell, injured or receiving hospital or medical treatment which can be evidenced they are marked with an 'I' to indicate illness.</i>
J	Interview with a prospective employer or another educational establishment.	Authorised
L	Late (before the close of registers) <i>Note: Pupils who are late must be accompanied to Reception by a parent or other adult responsible for their punctuality</i>	This does not affect their attendance percentage, but it is disruptive to their learning and that of their classmates. Children who arrive late miss the start of lessons and find it difficult to settle and join in.
M	Medical/ Dental appointments	Authorised
N	No reason yet provided for absence.	Unauthorised
O	Unauthorised absence not covered by any other code. <i>Note: Any pupil deemed by the school to be absent without good cause or reason will be unauthorised and marked with an 'O' code.</i>	Unauthorised
P	Approved sporting Activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller Absence – travelling with agreement of the school	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after the close of registration)	Unauthorised <i>This code counts as an unauthorised absence and affects their overall percentage. In addition, it is disruptive to their learning and that of their classmates. Children who arrive late miss the start of lessons and find it difficult to settle and join in. Persistent unauthorised absence may trigger a penalty notice.</i>
V	Educational visit or trip organised or authorised by the school	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school – pupil of non-compulsory school aged is not required to attend	Not counted in attendances
Y	Enforced Closure due to exceptional circumstances – local/national emergency, or a pupil is in custody	Not counted in attendances
Z	Pupil not on the admission register yet	Not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned school closure – whole or partial closure due to holidays/ bank holiday and Inset	Not counted in possible attendances

9. Children missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing from education (CME) are at significant

risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life. A child missing from education is defined as a child of compulsory school age that is not on roll at a school, or a child that has unauthorised absence from school for a lengthy period of time and cannot be contacted.

This includes children who are removed from school for the purposes of moving but fail to arrive at the new destination school identified by the parent or guardian, within 10 working days. It is the responsibility of the out-going school to complete the CME referral. When the school is made aware of a pupil moving the school will request detailed information from parents or guardians including the name and telephone number of the new school, the intended start date, up-to-date contact details for the parent or guardian, and wherever possible a new address to assist with enquiries should a pupil be identified as missing.

If the whereabouts of a pupil are not known the school will complete their own checks within the initial 10 working days. The list is not exhaustive, but may include:

- contact parents, carers, relatives or neighbours
- check local authority databases or 'school2school' systems
- conduct a home visit, following appropriate risk assessment, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives
- contact the local authority where a child lives, if different from where the school is
- check with other agencies involved with the child or family
- check with UK Visas and Immigration or Border Force
- check with the local authority or school to which a child may have moved.
- A home visit by school staff, the Local Authority or other commissioned attendance support
- Contact with parents by telephone, letter, email, text or any other communication system used by the school
- Contact with all emergency contacts the school hold for the pupil to try and ascertain their whereabouts
- Referral to Social Care, the Police and other external partners if the child, or young person is considered to be at risk

Following the school making reasonable enquiries they will complete a CME referral to Essex County Council or Southend City Council, providing as much information as possible. The relevant local authority will make extensive enquiries to ensure that children are located.

10. Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving one of our Trust schools, other than at the end of:

- Year 6 at the end of primary school
- Year 11 at the end secondary school

Parents and guardians are required to share information regarding a child's name, year group and tutor group, current address, last date of school attendance, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts of all our pupils and safeguard them.

Removal from school role following a permanent exclusion

A pupil's name will be removed from the school admission register if:

- 15 school days have passed since the parents were notified of local governing board pupil discipline committee's decision to not reinstate the pupil and no application has been made for an independent review panel, or
- The parents have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel

Where an application for an independent review has been made within 15 school days, the governing board will wait until that review has concluded before removing a pupil's name from the register.

While the pupil's name remains on the school's admission register, the pupil's attendance will still be recorded appropriately. Where alternative provision has been made for an excluded pupil and they attend it, code B (education off-site) or code D (dual registration) will be used on the attendance register.

Where excluded pupils are not attending alternative provision, code E (absent) will be used.

11. Safeguarding – Children who are absent from education

As a Trust we prioritise safeguarding our children and young people; we have a duty to promote the welfare of children, and investigate the reasons for unexplained absence and lateness, and absence which is persistent.

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

Not only can regular absence, particularly unexplained absence, be a red flag for safeguarding issues, but only when children are in school can they talk to staff and be given support for any pastoral and safeguarding concerns. Knowing who is absent and why, is fundamental to effective safeguarding.

Staff who monitor school attendance are in a frontline position to spot safeguarding issues, but all staff have a responsibility to monitor persistent absenteeism, but also to notice sudden changes in patterns of attendance and unexplained absence, which may be a key indication that something is wrong.

Children who are missing out on education are at increased risk of being criminally exploited or being groomed and exploited by gangs.

Patterns of absence, level of parental contact and engagement, pre-existing welfare concerns, and pupils identified as vulnerable, or at risk will be monitored and analysed closely to ensure the safeguarding of our pupils.

Safeguarding interventions, in line with our Safeguarding Policy, such as unannounced home visits by school and commissioned attendance support, referrals to Essex Police for welfare checks, CME referral and referral to social care will be considered and where appropriate, undertaken to ensure the safeguarding of all our pupils.

12. Summary

The Trust has a legal duty to promote good attendance and prepare pupils for their lives beyond school. Equally parents have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly. All staff, and the governing body are committed to working with parents, students and partners, as this is the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance for our school community, and the best outcome for pupils. The schools will:

- publish attendance and absence figures
- monitor attendance closely
- follow up concerns (especially if these may be symptomatic of child protection concerns)
- promote good attendance

Review date: September 2023

Chair of LGB signature.....

Date.....

Annex A
Essex County Council Code of Conduct

PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS

EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area to all Essex residents.

The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a code of conduct and any persons issuing Penalty Notices to a parent must do so in accordance with this protocol. Essex County Council is legislatively responsible for administering the Penalty Notice scheme and will do so in accordance with a number of legislative and non-legislative requirements.

[Essex County Council Code of Conduct](#)

The Essex code has been agreed following consultation with;

Essex County Council representatives – Attendance Compliance Team and Essex Legal Services.

Representatives from Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Essex Schools

Essex Police

Persons accredited under Essex Police's Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS)

The Code of Conduct is in accordance with the following legislation;

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of parents of excluded pupils, schools, and the LA (Local Authority) is set out in a succession of acts, regulations and other guidance.

Education Act 1996

Under Section 7 of the Act: the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have, this can be by regular attendance at school, or otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child themselves). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend the school regularly the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. In addition, if it can be proved that a parent knew of the child's non-attendance and failed to act, then they may be found guilty under Section 444(1 A). This offence (known as the higher or aggravated offence) can lead to a warrant being issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction may result in a higher level fine and/or a custodial sentence.

On 6 April 2017, in the case of *Isle of Wight Council v Platt* [2017] UKSC 28, the Supreme Court ruled that the word 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.'

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents>

The Act added two new sections (444A and 444B) to the Education Act. It introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444; the issuing of penalty notices is governed by:

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-police-bill>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/contents/made>

Children Act 1989

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/36>

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/16>

Education and Inspections Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2013)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/regulation/2/made>

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUES

AUTHORISATION TO ISSUE PENALTY NOTICES

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority (LA). It has been agreed that the Attendance Compliance Team, on behalf of Essex LA, will usually issue penalty notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing penalty notices.

Head Teachers (and Deputy Head Teachers and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by the head teacher) and police, and persons accredited by the community safety accreditation scheme are all able to issue the notices under the Act, although there is no requirement for them to do so.

In Essex it has been agreed that the Police and Head Teachers will not issue penalty notices to parents. Persons accredited through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme are authorised to do so.

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age, which commences the term immediately following the child's fifth birthday and finishes on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn sixteen.

Penalty notices will only be issued as a conclusion to a series of processes and when all attempts to address school attendance matters have been unsuccessful. If a previous Penalty Notice has been unsuccessful, rationale and justification should be provided as to why issuing another Penalty Notice would improve the attendance of the student. If schools are not aware of any previous or current legal interventions, they must email attendancecompliance@essex.gov.uk A response will be sent within 3 working days.

Parents cannot be penalised more than once for the same period of absence.

Domestic and European legislation and case law makes it clear that when serving a formal Notice in criminal proceedings, the recipient must be clearly and unambiguously identified. For the Purpose of issuing a Penalty Notice under this Code, the parent's first and last name must be cited on the Notice and any covering letter.

Essex partners have agreed to use Penalty Notices for the following circumstances however the offence under s444 Education Act 1996 is the same whether issued for unauthorised leave of absence (ULA) or irregular school attendance (ISA):

Penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence (ULA)

Penalty Notices may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, whereby a parent made an application to the school which the Head Teacher has deemed not for exceptional circumstances. In addition, a Penalty Notice may also be issued, whereby the parent did not submit a leave of absence request, however the school have reason to believe the absence was for the purpose of a holiday and should not be authorised as parent has not provided any additional evidence which the Head Teacher deems appropriate to support the absence.

In addition to the above criteria, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

The Local Authority requests that for Penalty Notices to be issued, parents must be duly warned of the legal ramifications under separate cover if they remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday. Schools/Academies must reference the use of Penalty Notices within their Attendance Policy which must be available to all parents/carers online and/or in hard copy within the school, accessible to parents to read. Schools should remind parents of the protocol regarding leave of absence during term time.

Penalty Notices for Irregular School Attendance (ISA)

Penalty Notices may be issued where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous 10 school weeks.

Parents must have been issued with a Legal Action Warning Letter with accompanying Legal fact sheet and given opportunities to inform the school of any factors impacting on their ability to ensure their child attends school regularly. Warning letters are valid for 18 calendar weeks.

The Local Authority advises that the following template is used for irregular school attendance referrals as this has been specifically designed to enable the progression of cases if appropriate. This letter must be on headed paper from the school or accredited persons issuing the notice. The legal fact sheet must be included

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Attendance_Combpliance/Documents/Legal%20Action%20Warning%20Letter%20for%20schools.docx .

Failure to issue warning to parents may result in the Penalty Notice being withdrawn or not issued.

All penalty notice referrals or notifications from Accredited Persons must be sent via Essex County Council's online portal and all relevant pre-referral work in accordance with the Local Authority requirements must be uploaded alongside the referral/notification.

The Local Authority must be satisfied that the substantive offence in accordance with s.444 Education Act 1996 has been committed prior to issuing a Penalty Notice.

Evidence of attempts to address attendance concerns within the previous 8 weeks prior to requesting or notifying of a Penalty Notice must be submitted. Satisfactory evidence includes letters, notes of home visits, meetings, telephone calls etc.

N.B. for ULA and ISA PN's consideration should always be given to whether it is appropriate to issue to absent parents.

Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for Irregular school attendance/unauthorised leave of absence

Discretion will be used to enable up to two penalty notices to be issued to each parent for each child within a twelve-month period. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team may instigate legal proceedings.

Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for pupils identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep

School attendance and exclusion sweeps take place in Essex and children stopped are often with parents condoning the absence.

If the Head Teacher has not authorised the absence of a pupil stopped by a Local Authority Officer and Police Officer on a sweep and there has been at least 9 unauthorised absences for that pupil during the preceding 10 school weeks, school will issue a legal action warning letter to the parent within 14 days. If there are any further unauthorised absences, during the following 18 calendar weeks a referral to the Attendance Compliance Team may be submitted for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve-month period for pupils identified on a school attendance and exclusion sweep. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team will instigate legal proceedings.

Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)

The excluding school must have notified the parent informing them of their duty and warning that a penalty notice could be issued.

Where there is more than one person liable for the offence, a separate penalty notice may be issued to each person.

Where a pupil is present in a public place in the first five days of a fixed period of exclusion the Essex Local Authority would issue a penalty notice if the school is in their area. Where the child has been permanently excluded, it would be the authority where the child resides.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for exclusion

Essex will issue a maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent for each child during a 12-month period.

Number of penalty notices which can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve-month period for unauthorised leave of absence. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance, the Attendance Compliance Team will consider further legal interventions.

PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICE

The penalty for each parent issued with a Penalty Notice is £120 for each child, however if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, it is reduced to £60. (Service by post is deemed to have been affected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post).

All penalties are paid to the LA and revenue generated is retained to administer the system and contribute towards s444 prosecutions following the non-payment of the Penalty Notice.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Attendance Compliance Team will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 4441.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

WITHDRAWAL OF PENALTY NOTICE

A penalty notice may be withdrawn by the local authority named in the notice under the following circumstances:

Where the local authority deems it ought not to have been issued i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct or where the evidence does not support the issuing of a penalty notice

It appears to the local authority that the notice contains material errors

Where it has been issued to the wrong person named as the recipient.

CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND ITS LOCAL PARTNERS

The Attendance Compliance Team and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct bi-annually unless local needs require otherwise.

VERSIONS

Original Code of Conduct was introduced in September 2004.

Most recent revision - November 2017 Revised March 2019 for implementation from April 2019

Annex B:

DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. September 2022

All Pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:

<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>
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Persistently absent pupils

<p>Parents are expected to:</p>	<p>Schools are expected to:</p>	<p>Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:</p>	<p>Local authorities are expected to:</p>
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<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including and parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p>
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Severely absent pupils

<p>Parents are expected to:</p>	<p>Schools are expected to:</p>	<p>Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:</p>	<p>Local authorities are expected to:</p>
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<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>
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Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special education needs, educational psychologists and mental health services to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.</p>

	Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.		
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Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>