

Attendance Policy

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1 Introduction & Background

Doucecroft recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of learner attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: [Working together to improve school attendance](#). This includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every learner has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that learners succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that learners have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It has been developed in consultation with Trustees, teachers, local Headteacher Associations, the Local Authority and parents and carers. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor learner attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

2 Aims

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

- Having a welcoming environment where learners feel safe, secure and valued.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality by working with each learner to remove barriers to learning.
- Ensuring attendance is accurately recorded and monitored electronically on School Pod. Reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Reviewing of class/individual attendance termly will assist in forming interventions to address patterns of absence.
- To promote effective partnerships with the LA Attendance team and other services and agencies to effectively remove barriers to learning and promote good attendance.

- To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or an ingrained habit of low attendance at school.

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved collaboratively with school, parents/carers and the child. If parents feel the child is reluctant to attend school, we will work with the family to understand the root of the problem and provide any necessary support.

At Doucecroft we will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and understand it is the responsibility of staff to promote these good patterns of attendance. Staff will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. This policy will be reviewed annually by our Wellbeing Lead and Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Board of Trustees.

For our children 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 school that learners must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the Headteacher not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

3 Promoting Regular Attendance

At Doucecroft School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all our learners from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Senior Attendance Champion is our Wellbeing lead.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, learners and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Placing the improvement of attendance on the school development plan.
- Involve parents/carers in decisions.
- Parents will be kept informed of the child's attendance with reports home at the end of each half term period.
- Doucecroft will be sensitive and show understanding of the circumstances of individual learners.
- Our Family Liaison Officer will support parents to achieve regular attendance.
- We will work in partnership with parents/carers and where appropriate learners to reintegrate after long term absence or after long periods out of education.
- Doucecroft will follow up on absence from the first day of absence if the reason is not thought to be adequate for missing school or if no reason is provided at all.
- Doucecroft will carry out staged interventions before referring to the local authority.

4 Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any learner'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 and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as 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.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session.
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher, including arranged by other family members or friends.
- Day trips.
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

5 Persistent Absenteeism (PA) & Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A learner is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any learner's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

All learners who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a '**persistent absentee**'.

A learner who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Learners within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

Children who are absent from education:

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect.
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM.

- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families.
- Come from the families of service personnel.
- Go missing or run away from home or care.
- Are supervised by the youth justice system.
- Cease to attend a school.
- Come from new migrant families.

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being absent, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the Police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

6 Absence Procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member learners and parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis is:

The Attendance Team – dcattendance@autism-anglia.org.uk

We monitor and review all learners absence and the reasons that are given thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school, the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.45am. This school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Alternatively, you may email dcattendance@autism-anglia.org.uk Please be aware that if you leave a voicemail or email to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we can discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the above is to be recorded as authorised.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.45am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents/carers and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS & Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (see appendix).

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us.
- If we are unable to contact parents/carers by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding.

- A referral will be made to the local authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence, or sooner if deemed appropriate, at which point your child will be “missing from education”.

If absence continues, we will:

- Write to you if your child’s attendance is below 95% or where punctuality is a concern.
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Family Liaison Officer or Senior Attendance Champion.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or service if appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the local authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.
- We may contact other schools where siblings may be registered, make enquiries with any other services that may be known to the family.
- Doucecroft may request a Police welfare check if no contact has been successful after 5 days.

Planned Unavoidable Absences:

For any planned absences, such as medical appointments, days of religious observance or proposed absence for any other reason, even if only for a part of a day a ‘Request for Absence Form’ which is available from the school office or school website, **must be** completed and forwarded to the Headteacher. We do encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible to promote the importance of good attendance.

7 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Learners who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the registration for the school day for learners at Doucecroft are:

AM – All Key Stages

- Gates open at 10.25am Mondays and 8.40am Tuesdays to Fridays. Registration starts at 10.30am on Monday and 8.45am Tuesdays to Fridays when children can begin to come into school.
- Registers are taken at 10.45am on Monday and 9.00am Tuesday to Friday.
- Learners arriving on a Monday between 10.45am-11.15am or Tuesday to Friday between 9.00am-9.30am will receive a late mark ‘L’. Children arriving after these times the register will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site ‘U’ code, this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. Many Doucecroft learners are transported in via local authority provision, therefore lateness relating to the taxi collection times must be followed up by parents and supported by Doucecroft attendance team dcattendance@autism-anglia.org.uk
- Please note any late arrivals needs to go via the school’s reception office.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

PM – Key Stage 2

- Afternoon session starts at 12.40pm.

- Registers will be taken at 12.40pm-12.50pm daily.
- Learners arriving between 12.50pm-1.05pm will receive a late mark 'L'.
- After 1.05pm a 'U' code will be issued. This will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an authorized absence.

PM – Key Stage 3, Transition & Willow

- Afternoon session starts at 1.05pm.
- Registers will be taken at 1.05pm-1.20pm daily.
- Learners arriving between 1.20pm-1.35pm will receive a late mark 'L'.
- After 1.35pm a 'U' code will be issued. This will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

How We Manage Lateness:

The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness.

If a child has a persistent late record parents may be invited to meet with the Family Liaison Officer to discuss and try to resolve the barriers to lateness. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality. The school may send home 'late notes' to keep parents and carers informed. Any temporary reduced provisions will detail the start time agreed by parents, school and local authority.

We work closely with the local authority transport providers to ensure they are informed of school holidays and are aware of arrival/departure times; however, we would encourage parents to follow up with the provider.

Most learners are transported to school by taxi/minibus arranged by their Local Education Authority. Learners are expected to arrive at 10.30am each Monday (or the first day back following school closure) and at 8.45am from Tuesday to Friday inclusive. Children must attend on time to receive a mark in the register unless the lateness is unavoidable. Frequent lateness due to transport problems will be reported to the local authority transport contracts officer to ensure children receive the education they deserve.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the local authority for support and guidance. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with our Family Liaison Officer, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties 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.

8 Understanding Barriers To Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved 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 can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some learners face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include learners who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these learners. However, we will work with families and learners to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for all learners who have missed/are likely to miss 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

Some learners may have a history of poor attendance at school and may need encouragement and support from school and parents working collaboratively to improve this going forward. Specific problems relating to a child's avoidance to attend or make the transition from the home to school environment are best resolved between the school, parents, and the child. Parents are invited to contact their child's class teacher immediately to discuss any worries. A child could be avoiding school for several reasons – historical school experiences, difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for a child's reluctance to attend school and work to tackle the problem. Should any difficulties arise, parents are encouraged to contact the school at an early stage to address the problem together. We encourage parents to not cover up their absence or pressures to excuse learners from attending. A culture of openness about our thoughts and intentions will encourage good attendance.

As a rule, schools cannot place learners on a part-time timetable. All learners of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a learner's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a learner from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the learner is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a learner being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

Parents and learners should contact our Family Liaison Officer for more detailed support on 01206 771234 ext 1.

9 Local Authority Attendance Support Services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct), or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

10 School Attendance & The Law

New legislation was passed, The School Attendance (pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent National threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G,O and /or U coded within the schools registers). The 10 school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent, (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second penalty notice issued within a 3 year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

See Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct.

There is no entitlement in law for learners to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in a protest activity in school hours. 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 school attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. 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 any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of the school 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 their designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with National Frameworks and the Essex Code of Code, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of learners 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 calendar weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

At Doucecroft School '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 (as determined by the Headteacher). 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, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or who has paid for the holiday (including Grandparents or other family or friends).

The Headteacher/School may discuss the leave of absence request with other Education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine and exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are, however, advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

11 Deletion From Roll

For any learner leaving Doucecroft School, other than at the end of year 11-14 parents/carers are required to complete a 'Learners moving from *school*' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school and address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and to appropriately safeguard all our learners, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for the learner and key family members, in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the learner being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that learner, and in any event no later than the time at which the learner's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a learner's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the learner has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

12 Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual learners or groups of learners when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit learners' attendance data to the Department of Education on a daily basis (information about individual learners) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent learners are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with local authorities, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

13 Annexe A: DfE Guidance Summary Table of Responsibilities For School Attendance From 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

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>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.</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>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.</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 persistent absence.</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 and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the 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 regular conversation with every school to identify, 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, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and 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>

Persistently absent pupils

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 formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue 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>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance 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> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Severely absent pupils

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 formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continue 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>Continue 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>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND 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 is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</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 educational 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>

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>Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are.</p> <p>Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort.</p> <p>Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing 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>Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it.</p> <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

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 the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

Parents:	Schools:	Academy trustees and governing bodies:	Local authorities:
<p>Schools regularly update parents on their child's attendance.</p> <p>(If parents feel the school and or local authority have not delivered what they are expected to they should discuss the case with the school and/or local authority's attendance support team.)</p>	<p>The school's Senior Attendance Champion will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>The governing board or academy trust will hold the headteacher or executive leadership to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required. The board will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.</p> <p>Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a school has not met expectations or statutory duties the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group considers multi academy trusts' efforts on attendance as part of decision making.</p> <p>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections.</p>	<p>DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.</p> <p>Ofsted may consider the local area partnership's approach to improving attendance of children and young people with SEND as part of the SEND Area Inspection, and the local authority's approach to improving attendance for children with a social worker through inspecting local authority children's services.</p> <p>Ultimately, in cases where a local authority has not met expectations or statutory duties the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Secretary of State can consider a complaint.</p>

14 Annexe B: Essex Code of Conduct – Penalty Notice for Parents of Truants and Parents of Learners Excluded From School Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23

[School attendance and absence: Penalty notices | Essex County Council](#)

15 Annexe C: Helping Parents To Understand The Changes To Fines For Term Time Holidays



Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools after 19th August 2024.

Who may be fined?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including the U code (late after registers have closed).

For example: a 5 day holiday would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court.

Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

16 Annexe D: Illness Absence Guidance

<https://seureschools.essex.gov.uk/DisplayDocument.aspx?DocID=276>

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-i-keep-my-child-off-school-guidance-A3-poster.pdf>

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

17 Annexe E: DfE Absence & Attendance Codes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	Definition	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (arrives after start of morning or afternoon session but before register close) must add minutes late and reason	Present
<i>Present at approved off-site educational activity</i>		
B	Present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by school. We are ensuring that the learner is supervised and measures taken to safeguard the learner. (NOT Dual registration, such as college/ PE activities)	Approved attendance
D	Dual registration (i.e., learner attending other establishment)	Approved attendance
J1	Interview with prospective employers or educational establishment	Approved attendance
P	Approved and supervised by someone authorised by the school, a sporting activity (such as attendance of Special Olympics, not school PE activities)	Approved attendance
V	Educational visit or trip including Doucecroft residential trips	Approved attendance
W	Work experience for learners in last two years of compulsory education.	Approved attendance
<i>Codes when a pupil is not in school/ Authorised Absence/ school gives approval</i>		
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/ description) reason should be provided	Authorised absence
C1	For the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment aboard	Authorised absence
C2	Absence due to part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded-if no alternative educational provision is made whilst excluded. Must be provided after 5 days. If alternative provision is made appropriate code used	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) Add brief reason	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<i>Unauthorised Absence/ school is not satisfied with reason for absence</i>		
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence Must be followed up timely by class teacher or FLO alerted When reason is determined the register should be amended not left indefinitely; if no reason is established after a reasonable amount of time, it should be replaced with an O code	Unauthorised absence

O	Unauthorised absence, the school is not satisfied with reason for absence. (Not covered by any other code/description and school is not satisfied with the reason given)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed) should be actively discouraged and explanation must be sought from parents and time of arrival recorded	Unauthorised absence
<i>Administrative Codes/ not counted in possible attendances</i>		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	
X	Non-compulsory age	
Y1	Usual transport not available	
Y2	Widespread travel disruption	
Y3	Unable to attend due to unavoidable partial closure	
Y4	Unable to attend due to full closure	
Y5	Unable to attend due to criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend – unavoidable causes other than Y1 -Y6	
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	
#	School closed to learners	