



Attendance Policy Academic Year 2024/25

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The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is:

Name: Mr. S. Bowsher;

Email: office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk.

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

Name: School Office;

Email: office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk.

The name of our Link Local Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Name: Ms. Mercedes Romero-Fernandez.

1. Introduction and Background

This Policy uses, as its baseline, the Essex County Council template dated September 2024.

Larchwood Primary School (LPS) recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

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 (SEN) that they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure that their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly, and on time. This means that 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 Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. The LPS Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This Policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins the LPS ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure that every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

The Policy has been developed in consultation with school governors, 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 LPS commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

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

This LPS 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 and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and that reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For LPS children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule at LPS that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the Headteacher (HT), not the parent/carer, who can authorise the absence.**

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

LPS believes in developing good patterns of attendance and sets high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils from the outset. It is a central part of the LPS vision, values, ethos and day-to-day life. LPS recognises the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion (the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at LPS is:

Mr. S. Bowsher (HT);

Email: office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk

The Local Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is:

Name: Ms. Mercedes Romero-Fernandez.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all members of LPS staff.

To help everyone to focus on this, LPS:

- Submits a daily attendance return to the DfE's, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Builds strong relationships and works jointly with families;
- Provides parents/carers with details on attendance in its newsletters, including articles and attendance data;
- Promotes the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately completes admission and attendance registers and has effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrates excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Rewards good or improving attendance;
- Celebrates attendance in weekly celebration assemblies;
- Awards certificates to children for 100% attendance;
- Reports to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contacts parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the LPS target for attendance.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning journey and ability to progress. 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 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 has to be classified by LPS (not by the parent/carer), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why 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 LPS for a genuine reason, such as illness (although parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for a 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 LPS does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to LPS referring to the Local Authority (LA) for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes (this list 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 LPS after the close of registration, are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes. However, this is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents/carers to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the HT, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time, which has not been agreed.

4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil 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 causes considerable damage to any pupil's education and LPS needs the full support and cooperation of parents/carers to resolve this. All pupils, who have attendance levels of 90% or below, are considered to be a persistent absentee.

A pupil, who has missed 50% or more schooling, is defined by the Government as '**severely absent**'. Pupils 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.

5. Absence Procedures

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

Name: School Office;

Email: office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk.

LPS thoroughly monitors and reviews all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are provided.

If a child is absent from LPS, the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact LPS on the first day of absence before 09.00;
- LPS has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take a parent/carer call, or parents/carers may call into LPS personally and speak to the School Office staff. Parents and carers should be aware that, if they leave a voicemail to report a child's absence, they may receive a call from LPS in order to discuss the absence before deciding as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact LPS on every further day of absence, before 09.00;
- Ensure that a child returns to school as soon as possible and that they provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where a 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 LPS staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (Appendix B).

If a child is absent, LPS:

- Telephones or texts parents/carers on the first, and every subsequent, day of absence, if it has not heard from them. However, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to contact LPS;
- If the School Office is unable to contact parents/carers by telephone, staff telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral is made to the LA if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the tenth day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point a child will be considered to be "missing from education."

A list of attendance for each class is recorded in the School Office with children absent marked.

Any children arriving between 08:40 and 09:10 are given a late mark. Parents/carers are asked to sign their child in electronically, and to provide a reason for the absence.

Any children arriving after 09:10 without valid reason or authorisation are given an unauthorised absence (U) code in the register.

The HT is informed of any absent children, who currently have low attendance, or are a safeguarding concern.

The same attendance register is completed at 13:30 at the start of the afternoon session.

If absence continues, LPS can:

- Write to parents/carers if a child's attendance is causing concern, including, but not exclusively, if attendance falls below 90%, and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Invite parents/carers into School to discuss the situation with the HT or a member of the LPS Senior Leadership Team (SLT);

- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, which includes the setting of attendance targets, to address any barriers to attendance and makes clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of the child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services;
- Issue a legal warning letter;
- Refer the matter to the LA for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates further.

6. Lateness

Poor punctuality is unacceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill, which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils, 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 start and close of the school day for all pupils at LPS are:

- Gates open: 08.20;
- Doors open: 08.30;
- Registration closes: 08.40;
- End of the school day: 15.10 (Reception and Years 1 and 2) , 15.15 (Years 4, 5 and 6).

How LPS manages lateness:

- The school day starts at 08.30 when children can begin to come into school;
- Registers are taken at 08.40;
- Children arriving after 08.40 are required to come into school via the School Office. They need to be accompanied by a parent/carer and parents/carers must sign children in using the electronic system and must provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded.
- At 09.10, the registers are closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time, they receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U' (unless the lateness has been approved), but this does **not** count as a present mark and it means that they have an unauthorised absence;
- LPS may contact parents/carers regarding lateness;
- From time to time, a member of LPS staff undertakes a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the School.

Unauthorised lateness could result in LPS making a referral to the LA for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If a child has a persistent lateness record, parents/carers are asked to meet with the HT, but they can approach the School at any time if they are having difficulties getting their child to school on time. LPS expects parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to children and, as a school, celebrates good class and individual punctuality.

7. 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 LPS, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks that their child is

reluctant to attend school, LPS works with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. LPS 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 LA team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, parents/carers may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils, 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 pupils. However, LPS works with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. LPS 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 LA for all pupils, who have missed/are likely to miss, 15 or more school days (consecutive or cumulative) due to medical reasons/illness.

Refer to Appendix C for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance:

Name: Mr. S. Bowsher;

Email: office@larchwood.essex.sch.uk.

8. Local Authority Attendance Support Services

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

Parents/carers are expected to work with LPS and the LA to address any attendance concerns. Parents/carers 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, LPS may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the LA. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Appendix D for the Essex County Council Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

9. School Attendance and 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/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/carers 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.

10. 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 ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. The ten 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 LPS registers). The ten school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent/carer (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 three year period results in a fine of £160 per parent/carer, per child. If a third offence is committed, the matter may be referred to the LA for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent/carer may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to three months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, they receive a criminal conviction.

See Appendix D for the Essex County Council Code of Conduct.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during term-time to go on holiday or be otherwise absent for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in 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 HTs may not grant any leave of absence during term-time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a LPS rule that a leave of absence is not granted in term-time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the HT, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance. Only the HT or their designate (not the LA) 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 LPS. LPS usually considers that the parent/carer, who has made the application, is, therefore, allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents/carers, who are on the holiday, are allowing the leave. Where a parent/carer removes a child after their application for leave has been refused, or, where no application was made to LPS, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Essex County Council Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent/carer believed to have allowed the absence.

At LPS, 'exceptional circumstances' are 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 HT). The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are events that are “rare, significant, unavoidable and short”. By 'unavoidable', LPS means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The HT may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the LA to determine any exceptional circumstances.

If leave of absence is authorised, LPS does not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents/carers 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 pupil leaving LPS, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Leavers' form, which can be obtained from the School Office. This provides LPS with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that LPS knows the whereabouts and appropriately safeguards all of its pupils, even those who leave LPS.

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

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

12.Absence Data

LPS uses data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the DfE on a daily basis in accordance with the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. LPS also combines this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

LPS shares information and works collaboratively with other schools in the area, LAs, and other partners, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Appendix A: LPS Attendance Flowchart



Larchwood Primary School Attendance Flow Chart

Daily monitoring of attendance will involve checking for regular absence patterns and sending home truancy alerts for pupils who are absent, where no reason has been provided.

We expect 100% attendance from every pupil at Larchwood.

Larchwood celebrates good attendance through the weekly attendance ladder, newsletters, 100% attendance certificates, letters home and extra time at break.

PUNCTUALITY: Pupils should be on site ready to come into school at 08:30. Doors close at 08:40. Pupils, who arrive after the registers have closed at 09:10, will have their absence recorded as unauthorised (code 'U') unless evidence can be provided that the absence should be considered as authorised.



Parents/carers are expected to call the school before 09:00 if their child is too unwell to come to school and will need to do this each day until the child returns. *Please note that, in some cases, absences may only be classified as authorised where medical evidence is provided if requested by the school.*



If a child's absence persists and falls below **90% or is a concern**, a meeting will be held with the Headteacher and actions for improvement set together with a target.



Attendance will be monitored and reviewed every two weeks to ensure that there is an improvement and that the target is going to be reached.

This will also be the case for children, who have had persistent absence over the previous year. Persistent absence is where attendance falls below 90%



If parents/carers or pupils do not engage with the strategies put in place by the school and absences continue to drop, the Local Authority will be contacted and a Fixed Penalty Notice application will be submitted.

When ten sessions of unauthorised absence are reached (this can include absence from a previous term), the school will apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

How to report your child's absence



If you need to report your child absent, please notify the school **by phone before 09:00 on every day of your child's absence. Before 08:00, messages can be left on the school answer phone.**

If we do not hear from a parent/carer regarding their child's absence, this will be considered a safeguarding concern. If the school is unable to make contact with a parent/carer, a home visit may occur.



Applications for 'Leave of Absence' are granted in exceptional circumstances, e.g. attending a family member's graduation, attending a funeral, Dance and Music examinations etc. These must be applied for in writing and in advance using the relevant form, which can be obtained from the School Office and the school website.



Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will be classified as an unauthorised absence. At this point, the Local Authority will be contacted and a fixed penalty notice will be issued if the absence meets the required threshold.




Please book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. Parents/carers must notify the school in advance of any pre-arranged appointments or treatment and provide a **copy of the appointment record to the School Office.**


Appendix B: NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness

What to do


Advice on childhood illnesses



Go to school; if needed, get treatment as required



Some restrictions for school attendance





Don't go to school and see the GP

What it's called?	What it's like	Going to school	Getting treatment	More advice
Asthma flare up	Worsening of usual symptoms	➤	Follow your care plan	Stay off school if feeling too unwell
Chicken pox	Rash begins as small, red, flat spots that develop into itchy fluid-filled blisters		Pharmacy	Back to school five days after on-set of the rash, or when all lesions are crusted over
Common cold	Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat	➤➤	Pharmacy	Ensure good hand hygiene
Conjunctivitis	Teary, red, itchy, painful eye(s)	➤➤	Pharmacy	Try not to touch eye to avoid spreading*
Flu	Fever, cough, sneezing, runny nose, headache, body aches and pain, exhaustion, sore throat		Pharmacy	Ensure good hand hygiene*
German measles/ Rubella	Fever, tiredness. Raised, red, rash that starts on the face and spreads downwards	●	GP	Back to school four days after the rash has started, if feeling well enough. Please let the school know, as pregnant members of staff may be affected.
Glandular fever	High temperature, swollen glands, sore throat; usually more painful than any before	➤➤	GP	*
Hand, foot & mouth disease	Fever, sore throat, headache, small painful blisters inside the mouth on tongue and gums (may appear on hands and feet)	➤➤	GP	Attend school while monitoring symptoms
Head lice	Itchy scalp (may be worse at night)	➤➤	Pharmacy	
Impetigo	Clusters of red bumps or blisters surrounded by area of redness	●	GP	Back to school when lesions crust or 48 hours after start of antibiotics
Measles	Fever, cough, runny nose, watery inflamed eyes, rash	●	GP	Back to school four days from on-set of rash, and if feeling well enough
Ringworm	Red ring shaped rash, may be itchy, rash may be dry and scaly or wet and crusty	➤➤	Pharmacy	
Scabies	Itching rash, commonly between fingers, wrists, elbows, arm	➤➤	GP	Back to school after first treatment
Scarlet fever	Fever, unwell, red tongue, sandpaper rash	●	GP	Exclusion period during first 24 hours of antibiotics*
Shingles	Pain, itching, or tingling along the affected nerve pathway. Blister-type rash		GP	Only stay off school if rash is weeping and cannot be covered
Sickness bug/ diarrhoea	Stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea		Pharmacy	Contact GP if symptoms persist after 48 hours
Threadworms	Intense Itchiness around anus	➤➤	Pharmacy	Ensure good hand hygiene
Tonsillitis/ Strep throat	Intense sore throat for more than 1 day	➤➤	Pharmacy	See GP if temperature lasts more than 48 hours or cannot swallow. Only need to stay off school if feeling too unwell
Whooping cough	Violent coughing, with a 'whoop'	●	GP	Exclusion period during first five days of antibiotics
Covid				Visit www.nhs.uk for latest guidance

*Attend school while monitoring symptoms.
This information is a guide and has been checked by health professionals. If you are unsure about your child's wellbeing, we recommend you contact your pharmacy or GP to check.

Working in partnership with

Should my child go to school/nursery today?
Hertfordshire and West Essex Healthier Together for further information
<https://www.hwehealthiertogether.nhs.uk/parentscarers>

Appendix C: DfE Guidance - Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (effective 19 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:
Not applicable.	<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>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.

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>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<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>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	<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>

Appendix D: 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

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-and-absence/penalty-notices>

Appendix E: 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.

<p>Who may be fined?</p> <p>Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.</p> <p><u>For example:</u> 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.</p>	<p>National Threshold</p> <p>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.</p> <p>These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence.</p> <p>For example: a 5 day holiday would meet the national threshold.</p> <p>The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.</p>
<p>First Offence</p> <p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:</p> <p>£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.</p> <p>Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.</p>	<p>Second Offence (within 3 years)</p> <p>The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:</p> <p>£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.</p>
<p>Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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'.</p>	

Appendix F: Illness Absence Guidance

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)