



ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL
ACADEMY

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

The School's Mission Statement

*To inspire, To learn, To achieve,
To keep our Catholic ethos at the centre of our lives,
To fulfil our educational potential, welcoming all and reaching out to the wider
world,
To truly be God's servant first*

This school Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy is based upon the guidance given from the Department of Education (DfE) document [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#). This policy is non-statutory but is intended to produce guidance to ensure the school maintains a high level of school attendance and to plan the school day and year to meet the legal framework. This policy also sets out possible interventions available to address student's poor attendance and behaviour at school. This Policy should be read alongside the statutory guidance given in the **Southend on Sea School Attendance-Guidance for Southend Schools and Parents/Carers- September 2025** (which is available on our website)

St Thomas More High School believes that high attendance at school is central to raising standards in education, ensuring all students can fulfil their potential and benefit from their education. Absence from lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind, and lower achievement and that high absence rates can be a potential safeguarding indicator.

This Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy has been approved and adopted by the Local Governing Committee of St Thomas More High School in October 2025 and will be reviewed annually by SLT in September 2026.

Signed by Mr Daniel Cauchi, Chair of the Governing Body:

Signed by Headteacher:

SAFEGUARDING & ATTENDANCE CONTACTS FOR ST THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2025

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER – MRS E SEDGEWICK CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606799.

Email- attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING AND ATTENDANCE LEAD

NAME: MR GEOFF MASON : Member of SLT

CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606771

DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD

NAME: MRS MICHELLE WALFORD

CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606773

DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD

NAME: MR PHILLIP MAXFIELD

CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606764

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

NAME: DANIEL CAUCHI

NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

NAME: LORRAINE MCCLEAN

DESIGNATED LEAD FOR LAC

NAME: MRS ALISON LINDSAY : Member of SLT

CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606712

EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS CONTACT FOR STAFF :

safeguarding@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

gmason@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

pmaxfield@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk

DIRECT OUT OF OFFICE HOURS FOR C-SPOC

01702 215007

KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

CSPOC Children's Social Care, Southend City Council:

Where the school has concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.

01702 215007

c-spoc@southend.gov.uk

OUT OF OFFICE HOURS:

To make URGENT referrals

0345 606 1212

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR and LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO):

Where there are concerns/allegations in respect of people working with children

ALLISON FRANCIS

01702 534539

allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk

SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR:

SHARON LANGSTON

01702 534591

LADO@southend.gov.uk

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Definitions](#)
3. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
4. [Attendance expectations](#)
5. [Absence procedures](#)
6. [Attendance register](#)
7. [Authorising parental absence requests](#)
8. [SEND- and health-related absence](#)
9. [Absence in exceptional circumstances](#)
10. [Truancy](#)
11. [Absent pupils](#)
12. [Attendance intervention](#)
13. [Working with parents to improve attendance](#)
14. [Persistent absence \(PA\)](#)
15. [Legal intervention](#)
16. [Monitoring and analysing absence](#)
17. [Training of staff](#)
18. [Deletion of names from the admission register](#)
19. [Attendance Monitoring Procedures](#)

Appendices

Statement of intent

St Thomas More High School believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

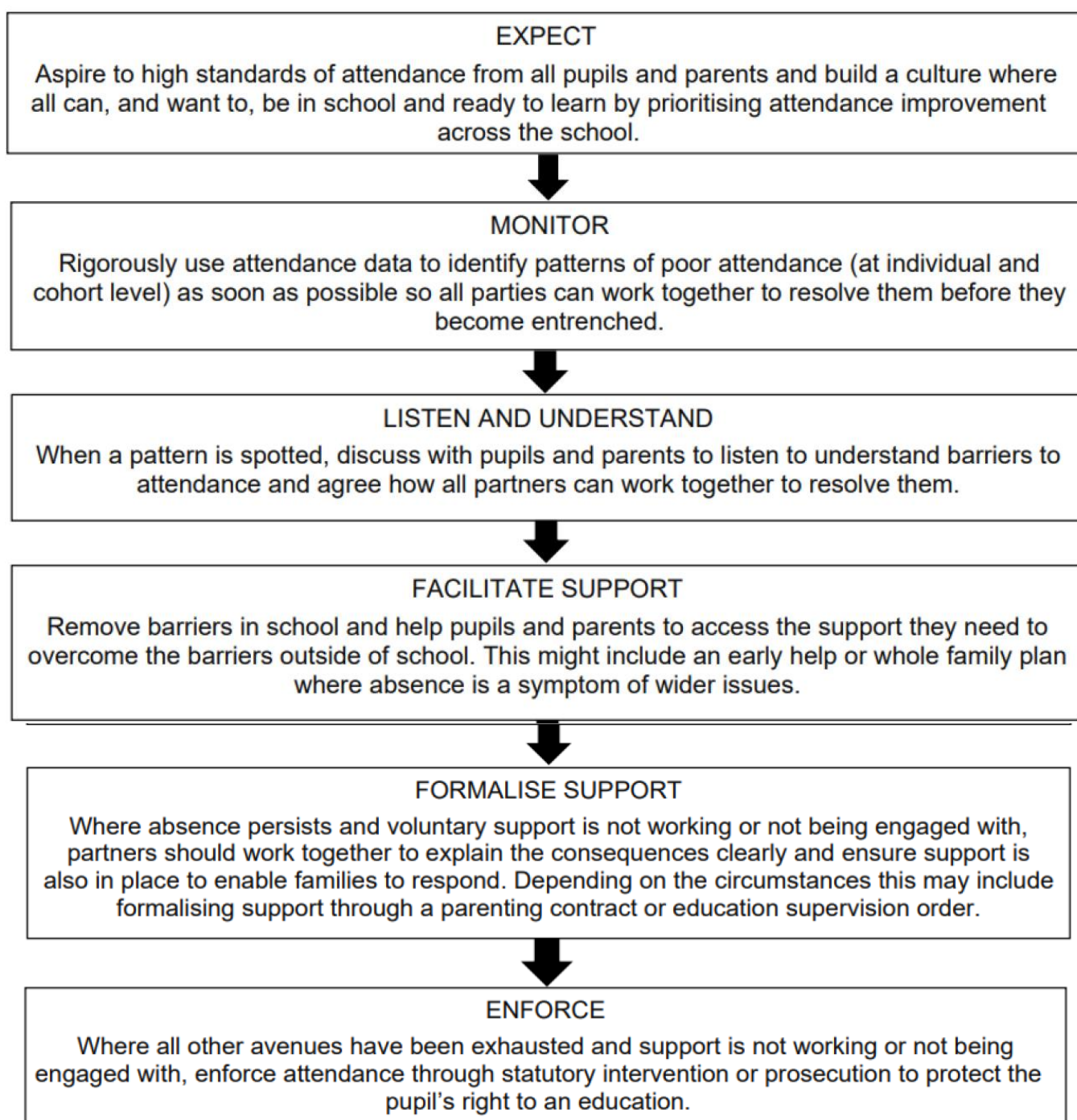
We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

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

We are committed to:

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

- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.



(the above image is taken from [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#))

The school's attendance officer is **Mrs Edel Sedgewick** and can be contacted via attendance@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations) 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Children missing education'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- DfE 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- Southend on Sea School Attendance-Guidance for Southend's Schools and Parents/Carers Sept 2025
- Southend-on-Sea City Council's Code of Conduct under the Provision of the Education (Penalty Notices) Regulation 2004- Sept 2025

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

Non-statutory Guidance

- [Guidance for parents on school attendance, Office of the Children's Commissioner](#)
- [Focus report: Out of School, Out of Sight](#)
- [DfE Toolkit-for-schools-communicating-with-families-to-support-attendance](#)
- [DfE Annex A: example attendance letters and emails to parents and carers](#)
- [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to part-time timetable
- Code D: Dual registered at another school
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Unauthorised absence:

- Code G: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N: Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason – equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year.

Missing education:

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

3. Roles and responsibilities

The local governing committee has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.

- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties including accurate maintenance of the attendance register and the sharing of information with the DfE and LA [.](#)
- Ensuring the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to the governors
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary, or delegating this responsibility as appropriate.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with the LA by notifying them when a pupil's name is added to or removed from the school's admissions register outside standard transition times.
- Providing the LA with the names and addresses of pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been absent without authorisation for a continuous period of ten school days.
- Informing the LA of any pupil of compulsory school age who has been recorded as unwell and whom the school reasonably believes will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively due to illness.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Contacting the school to report their child's absence before the beginning of the school day and advising on when it is expected that their child will return.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to all timetabled lessons when at school.

4. Attendance expectations

Section 1: Parents' responsibilities to ensure regular school attendance

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age (age 5 – 16) receive a suitable full-time education. It is also important that parents encourage their child's regular and punctual attendance at school. If a child is registered at a school, then it is vital that they attend on a regular basis. This means parents must ensure their child attends school every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend school or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

It is important that everyone works together to help children obtain the best possible start in life with a good education. Parents should work in partnership with the school, notifying the school of the reason for any of their child's absences and highlighting any areas of concern they may have as soon as possible, so they can be addressed quickly.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

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

The school day will start at 8:45am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by 8:40am. Pupils will have a morning break at 11:10am, which will last until 11:30am, and a lunch break at 1:30pm, which will last until 2:30pm – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:00am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they were absent when the register started being taken but arrive before the register is closed. The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by 12:30pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time but arrive before the register is closed.
- The afternoon register will close at 12:35pm. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

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

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

5. Absence procedures

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

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, member of Attendance Team will contact the parent via telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school.

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

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.

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

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

The school will request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will provide the LA with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days, where their absence has been recorded using one or more of the unauthorised absence codes (G, N, O, and/or U), as defined in national attendance guidance. The school will agree the frequency of these attendance returns with the LA, ensuring that they are submitted no less frequently than once per calendar month. If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil does not return from a period of leave or has a continuous period of absence, the school will work jointly with the LA to carry out reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the pupil's whereabouts. In conducting these enquiries, the school and its LA will liaise with the Home LA. If, following these enquiries, the pupil's name is removed from the school's admission register, the Home LA will be expected to investigate whether the pupil should be classified as a child missing education. The attendance reporting structure will be as follows:

1. Form tutor
2. Attendance officer
3. Director of Safeguarding and attendance
4. Headteacher
5. Education welfare officer

6. Attendance register

The school uses their MIS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of period

4. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes set out in Regulation 10 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = Planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- C1 = Leave of absence granted by the school for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- I = Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- S = Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- T = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet provided
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- D = Dual registered at another school
- B = Attending any other approved educational activity
- J1 = Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- K = Attending education provision arranged by the LA
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Q = Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip

- W = Work experience
- X = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5 = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Prospective pupil not on admission register

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will still be marked as absent in the register using the most appropriate absence code.

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

The school will share its daily attendance data with the DfE directly from the management information system.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the DfE will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

In accordance with the Records Management Policy, every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the

length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

A leave of absence for a pupil during term time will only be granted if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the school attendance regulations 2024 which are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a pupil is settling into the school, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

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

Illness and healthcare appointments

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

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will have the discretion to grant leave of absence during school hours for pupils to undertake employment, whether paid or unpaid, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

While not required to follow Regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the school will nonetheless record such absences using the appropriate code, where a pupil is participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad under a valid licence or exemption.

This code will be recorded as an authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code J1: Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

While not required to follow Regulation 11, the school will still use this code to record that a leave of absence has been granted for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational establishment.

The interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.

This code will be recorded as an authorised absence for statistical purposes.

Code S: Study leave for a public examination

While not required to follow Regulation 11, the school will use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave that has been granted for the purpose of studying for a public examination.

Code C2: Pupils subject to a part-time timetable

In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a pupil's best interests, the school will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a pupil on a part-time timetable.

While not required to follow Regulation 11, the school will still use this code to record when a pupil is absent with leave because they are subject to a part-time timetable in line with an agreement between the school and a parent the pupil normally lives with that the pupil should temporarily be educated part-time.

Where a pupil is receiving full-time education but only attends the school on a part-time basis—such as in cases of dual registration, part-time unregistered alternative provision, or flexi-schooling, the part-time timetable code will not be used. Instead, the school will record the pupil's absence using the appropriate attendance code that reflects the reason the pupil is not attending that particular session.

In such circumstances, the days on which the pupil is expected to attend school will be agreed in advance.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

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

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

Parent travelling or occupational purposes

A pupil will be considered a mobile child if they are of compulsory school age, have no fixed abode, and are travelling with their parent(s) due to the nature of the parent's trade or business, which requires them to move from place to place. In such cases, the school will ensure that this is a genuine reason for absence. Proof of the parent's circumstances will not be requested unless there is a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the explanation provided.

Parents will be encouraged to ensure that their child attends a school in the area to which they are travelling and, where appropriate, to arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at that school.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

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

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

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

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.

- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.
- The school will seek medical evidence for recording absences in a minority of cases.

Where a pupil's health need means that they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, the school will seek medical evidence to better understand the need of the pupil.

9. Absence in exceptional circumstances

The school will grant a leave of absence at its discretion. A leave of absence will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Each application will be judged individually, and the school will take into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context of each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days for which a pupil will be permitted to be absent. A leave of absence will always be granted entirely at the discretion of the school.

The school will only grant a leave of absence where an application is made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives, or by the pupil themselves if they will have reached the end of compulsory school age by the time of the absence.

Generally, a request for a holiday or other absence for the purposes of leisure and recreation will not constitute an exceptional circumstance, and such absences will not be granted.

Code C will be used for granted leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The use of the seven 'Y' codes for unavoidable circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes. Code Q will be used in circumstances where there is a lack of access arrangements.

10. Truancy

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

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

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school reception and sign back in again on their return.

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

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

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.

- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

11. Absent pupils

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

- The member of staff who has noticed the absent pupil will inform the Behaviour/Safeguarding Team immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Behaviour/Safeguarding Team
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms
 - The library
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided if the student is not found
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- A report will be made by the appropriate member of staff, logging the incident
- If the absent pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located

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

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

12. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the school will work with the local authority attendance officer to:-

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Review attendance weekly
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

School trips and events will be considered a privilege. Where attendance drops below 90 percent, these privileges may be taken away. The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

13. Working with parents to improve attendance

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

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

14. Persistent absence (PA)

The school will recognise PA as circumstances where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. Severe absence will be recognised in circumstances where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

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

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

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meeting with the pupil and their parent to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.

- Undertaking weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

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

15. Penalty notices and legal intervention

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

- The absence is due to a circumstance that does not warrant support, such as an unauthorised holiday taken during term time, and therefore whether a penalty notice should be issued.
- A penalty notice is the most effective tool to improve attendance and influence parental behaviour, or whether further support or an alternative legal intervention would be more appropriate.
- Issuing a penalty notice is appropriate in light of any obligations under the Equality Act 2010, for example where the pupil has a disability.
- To hold a formal meeting with the parents and the school's designated contact within the School Attendance Support Team.
- To work with the local authority to implement a parenting contract or apply for an education supervision order.
- To engage children's social care, particularly where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice, or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the headteacher, or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), the LA or the police. Any penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. In this instance, the school will have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in a public place. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

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

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500.

Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

16. Monitoring and analysing absence

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

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

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Year groups preparing for exams.

- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

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

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

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

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

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

The school works with the Local Authority Attendance Team on a weekly basis using a banding system to help target resources and interventions where they are likely to have the greatest impact and in doing so, identify patterns, begin supportive conversations, target interventions and celebrate and share success.

The banding helps schools focus on:

- understand your absence distribution by number and percentage to better target areas of concern and move pupils up to the next banding
- identify pupils with and approaching persistent and severe absence rates, but also a greater focus on the students in Band 2.
- Pupils in Band 2 (5% to less than 10% absence) are approaching persistent absence and should be proactively targeted for early intervention. Schools must:
- Identify pupils in Band 2 using attendance data tools such as the DfE's Monitor Your School Attendance dashboard.
- Review underlying causes of absence and initiate light-touch support, such as check-ins, mentoring, or attendance incentives.
- Communicate with parents to raise awareness of the impact of absence and offer support before patterns become entrenched.
- Monitor progress and escalate support if attendance deteriorates toward Band 3.

- Early intervention at Band 2 is critical to preventing escalation into persistent absence and reducing the need for formal interventions later.
- identify absence trends across year groups, pupil groups and cohorts to target pupils who need support earlier
- consider underlying causes of absence
- devise strategies to address absence challenges
- set realistic goals by moving up a banding rather targets that are unlikely to be achievable
- support schools overarching attendance strategy to increase oversight for specific groups, times of year and other common factors leading to higher patterns of absence.

For further guidance refer to the DfE's [‘Monitor your school attendance: how to use the absence bandings report’](#)

School Absence Banding is available in the ‘insights dashboard’ of the Monitor your school attendance tool. You can access it via the [View your education data \(VYED\)](#) platform.

	Total Number	Total % pupils	Status
Band 1 - 0% to less than 5%			
Band 2 - 5% to less than 10%			Approaching PA
Band 3 - 10% to less than 15%			Persistently Absent
Band 4 - 15% to less than 20%			Persistently Absent
Band 5 - 20% to less than 25%			Persistently Absent
Band 6 - 25% to less than 30%			Persistently Absent
Band 7 - 30% to less than 35%			Persistently Absent
Band 8 - 35% to less than 40%			Persistently Absent
Band 9 - 40% to less than 45%			Persistently Absent
Band 10 - 45% to less than 50%			Persistently Absent
Band 11 - greater than or equal to 50%			Severely Absent

17. Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The local governing committee will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will be offered regular and ongoing training as part of their CPFD opportunities.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The local governing committee will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

18. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency

- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. Contact will be made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. The school will contact home by telephone. Any N codes not established after a week will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
2. Pupil attendance drops below 90 percent – the Attendance team will speak to pupils to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. AO will make a phone call home, if applicable.
3. Pupil attendance drops below 90 percent – a letter will be sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below of 90 percent.
4. Level 1-If attendance remains below 90% a level 1 letter will be sent home informing the parents that pupil's attendance is now below the persistent absence mark
5. Level 2- If a pupils attendance continues to fall 90% a level 2 letter and meeting will take place and parents invited into school to meet with the attendance team and local authority attendance officer
6. Education Welfare protocol will be followed, and a parental contract will be drawn up – there will be a six-week monitoring period. No improvements in this time will result in a final written warning. If there is still no further improvement following this, then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

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

First Offence

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

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

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

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.

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, per child paid 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 the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS

Appendix 2 – School Attendance Contract

School: Date of Meeting: Pupil Name: Date of Birth: Year Group:

Number of sessions missed to date: Number of minutes late to date:

Current Attendance: % Authorised Absence: % Unauthorised Absence: %

Parents Name: Date of Birth: Address: Contact Number:

Parents Name: Date of Birth: Address (if different): Contact Number:

Review Period	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	5 weeks	6 weeks
Review Date & Time					

Please complete with as much information as you can so a comprehensive plan can be put into place to support the family in improving and maintaining good attendance.

What are the challenges, and barriers to attending school?			
Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for Parents	Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented	By When	Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No
To ensure you child attends school every day and on time		Every day	
You must contact the school either before or at the start of each day your child going to be absent from school. Medical evidence may be required for further absences due to illness to be authorised	Contact received from parent/carer in person, via the absence telephone line/app/or text messaging service [delete as necessary] Sight of the Antibiotics – Appointment Card stamped with GP details – Appointment Letters – Doctors Certificate – Any relevant information from GP, Medical professional, or Chemist	Any time Your child is off due to illness	
Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for Student	Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented	By When	Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No
To attend school every day on time		Every day	
Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for School	Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented	By When	Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No
First Day Contact on days child is absent	To discuss with parent any concerns or worries the parent, child or school have throughout the review period and after	On going	

Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for School Attendance Officer	Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented	By When	Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No

All parents have a legal duty to ensure their child receives an education at school or otherwise to ensure they meet their fullest potential. If attendance fails to meet target set, consideration will be given to a referral to the Attendance Team who may take legal action under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996.

If the attendance actions are met and attendance has improved the school will continue to monitor. If attendance declines over the next 4 months a referral may still be considered.

Parents' consent to information sharing

We also understand and agree that information about me/us has been and will continue to be collected so that we, the school, and the LA can assess and provide appropriate assistance and services. The School and LA may also use this information for service planning, monitoring and research purposes and may share the information with external agencies and providers of relevant services that they need to work with, to ensure that we are provided with the most appropriate services. We understand that this information will be stored either electronically or in the manual records by the School and LA for case management purposes, to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. The School and LA will keep the information updated and notify anyone who is given the information of any changes to ensure corrections are made.

SIGNED BY: PRINT NAME SIGNATURE

Chair

Parent (1)

Parent (2)

School Representative Other Representative

Student (if appropriate)

School Attendance Contract - Review

Date of Review Meeting:

Possible number of sessions since Attendance Contract Date:

Actual Number of sessions attended: Number of lates:

Is there evidence of progress against previously agreed actions for all parties?	
Have these reduced the challenges and barriers to attending school?	
Are there any new challenges or barriers that have arisen?	

Any new or outstanding actions to be completed	Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented	By When

What is the appropriate next step:	Actions met and expected progress on attendance and punctuality at school - Close	Some progress and some actions met - Re-Review	Limited progress, child and family require additional/targeted support - commence case management	Little to no engagement and progress – refer under Unauthorised Absence/Irregular Attendance

Parents' consent to information sharing

We also understand and agree that information about me/us has been and will continue to be collected so that we, the school, and the LA can assess and provide appropriate assistance and services. The School and LA may also use this information for service planning, monitoring and research purposes and may share the information with external agencies and providers of relevant services that they need to work with, to ensure that we are provided with the most appropriate services. We understand that this information will be stored either electronically or in the manual records by the School and LA for case management purposes, to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. The School and LA will keep the information updated and notify anyone who is given the information of any changes to ensure corrections are made.

SIGNED BY: **PRINT NAME** **SIGNATURE**

Chair: Parent (1): Parent (2):

School Representative Other Representative

Student (if appropriate):

Appendix 3 – Request to issue a Penalty Notice for leave of absence taken in term time

All the below sections must be completed and returned to AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk for the legal interventions officer to process the request. (The request will be returned if not fully completed)

Form must be completed and returned no later than 4 weeks following the child's return to school. If submitted later than 4 weeks, the referral may be returned to you and a Penalty Notice may not be issued

	To be completed by head teacher	Tick when checked
Name of child		
Date of birth		
Name of 1st parent to be named on the Notice & DOB		
Name of 2nd parent to be named on the Notice & DOB		
Please check both addresses are correct at the time request is submitted, if Penalty Notice is sent to the wrong address this will be withdrawn and can be identified as a data breach		
Address of 1 st parent		
Address of 2 nd parent		
Dates of leave (10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year)		
Date child returned to school		
Copy of leave request from parent (attached)		
Copy of warning letter issued by head teacher (attached)		
Confirmation that all school policies are up to date with the new guidance in the Southend code of conduct and this has been shared with parents		

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the above information is accurate and that I wish for the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team to issue a Penalty Notice to the parent/s of the above child in accordance with the guidelines issued in the Southend code of conduct

Head Teacher Signature	
School	
Date No later than 4 weeks after child returns from their holiday	
Print Name	

Appendix 4 - Request to Issue a Penalty Notice for Unauthorised Absence/Irregular Attendance

To be completed by school and sent to AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk

Name of child	
Date of birth	
Name of 1 st parent to be invited to the Meeting & DOB	
Name of 2 nd parent to be invited to the Meeting & DOB	
Address of child	
Address of 2 nd parent if different	
Other agencies working with the Child/Family: Social Care, Supporting Families, CAMHS etc What is their plan to support attendance?	
Practitioners name	
What is their plan to support attendance?	
Is the young person registered as SEN Support or has an EHCP	

Criteria:

have an attendance rate of 90% or less within the previous 10 school weeks from the Notice to Improve
issue date have unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more

- is not 'looked after' by the local authority
- school has evidence of pre-referral work undertaken by the school
- where the parent(s) carer(s) attended the attendance support meeting, a parent contract was agreed
- the parent or pupil has not identified any valid reasons or barriers why they cannot attend school on a regular and punctual basis
- is not open to Social Care or CAMHS

The school should have systems in place as part of their attendance data analysis to swiftly identify pupils who meet the criteria. Where parents identify concerns or barriers to attending school, such as bullying, SEND, parenting or other additional needs requiring support, this framework would not be appropriate and instead the school should work with the pupil, parent, and carers to provide support, advice, and signposting to services to remove barriers and improve attendance.

List below all communications and activities to support family overcome the barriers to attending school prior to Attendance Support Meeting

	To be completed by school	Copy attached (?)
Number of Letters sent to parents		
Number of Home visits conducted		
Number of phone calls made		
Confirmation that all school policies are up to date with the new guidance in accordance with the Southend Code of Conduct and Attendance Policy and your policy has been shared with parents		

<div>Initial Attendance Support Meeting</div> <div>Attendance Support Meeting. Please complete a parenting contract and agree actions to support improved attendance and punctuality.</div> <div>When parents fail to attend the meeting, a letter should be sent home, outlining expectations and attendance actions.</div> <div>A review period will be given for improvements to be made with the review meeting date set at the meeting</div>	Date of meeting			
	Did parent(s) attend? Yes / No			
	Current Attendance % Current Unauthorised %			
	What are the identified barriers to attending school			
	Attendance contract actions			
<div>Attendance Support Review Meeting</div> <div>If no improvements & no mitigation, a Notice to Improve should be issued if threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions in the previous 10 weeks has been met</div>	Date of Review meeting 4/6 weeks after initial meeting			
	Did parent(s) attend? Yes / No			
	Attendance during review period %	Possible sessions	Sessions attended	
	Number of unauthorised sessions during Review period			
	Attendance Actions	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
	Date of Notice to Improve			

School Review Satisfactory improvements - no formal action. School continues to review and support the family.	Date of review 6 weeks following the Notice to Improve	
	Has attendance improved following the agreed actions? Yes/No	
	Overall Attendance %	

Insufficient improvements after all actions are met- referred to Local Authority Action - Penalty Notice / Prosecution to be agreed by Team Leader	Overall Unauthorised %	
	Date referral completed by school	
	Date referral sent to the Attendance legal intervention email box	

List below all interventions to support family overcome the barriers to attending school during the preceding 8/12 weeks

	Copy attached (2)	Outcome from communications
Number of Letters sent to parents		
Number of Home visits conducted		
Number of phone calls made		
Other interventions (please detail)		

Confirm the above information and attach documents to be an accurate account of events and parent(s) named on page one meets the criteria for Fast Track legal intervention by the School Attendance Team

Appendix 5 – Request for the Local Authority to hold a Pupil Planning Meeting (PPM)

Schools should treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

In communicating with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becoming, problematic schools **must** listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.
- Support and actions should be clearly identified within a parent contract or other pupil plan identifying actions for the parent, pupil, school, and external services (where appropriate)

As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them, identified in a school attendance parent contract or existing action plan. This may include referrals to services and organizations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

	To be completed by head teacher	Tick when checked (team leader)
Name of child		
Date of birth		
Name of 1 st parent to be invited to the meeting & DOB		
Name of 2 nd parent to be invited to the meeting & DOB		
Address of child		
Address of 2 nd parent if different		
Other agencies working with the Child/Family: Social Care, Supporting Families, SET CAMHS etc		
Practitioners name		
What is their plan to support attendance?		
Is the young person registered as SEN Support or has an EHCP		

Please demonstrate how the above has been implemented in the last 9 months prior to a request for a Pupil Planning Meeting, detailing all interventions in the relevant blue boxes.

To be completed by head teacher	Details of interventions in the past 6 months only	Tick when checked
Number of Letters sent to parents (Please enclose copies)		
Number of Home visits conducted & Outcome		
Date of the Attendance Support meeting held by school and Actions Agreed . Parenting Contract enclosed (or alternative plan)		
Number of phone calls made & Outcome		
Number of meetings held & Outcome		
Did the Parent /carer attend all meetings		
Details of identified barriers to attending school and the support provided by the school to address attendance concerns (Please detail) Please do not just add poor attendance as the barrier		
Details of any Special Educational Needs meetings and the plans in place		
Registration Certificate attached detailing current attendance which includes 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence prior to the referral submission		
Confirmation that all school policies are up to date with the new guidance in the Southend code of conduct and this has been shared with parents		

School representatives attending the PPM must come with prior knowledge of the school's

interventions and any new information gained since this request has been made.

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the above information is accurate, the school has provided every opportunity for support to improve pupil attendance and there are no mitigating circumstances surrounding any unauthorised absence. As such, I request for the School Attendance Team to hold a Pupil Planning Meeting in conjunction with school staff to consider formal sanctions through Magistrates Court or penalty notice to improve school attendance.

Head Teacher Signature	
School	
Date	
Print Name	

Return to AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk

Appendix 6 – Unauthorised Request for Leave – School letter example

Dear

Thank you for your letter regarding your request to take xx out of school for the purposes
..... from xx to xx.

I have considered your application and regret to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted.

The Department for Education advises that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. I am unable to authorise this holiday as the reasons stated on your application form are not deemed as exceptional.

If you decide to take your child/children out of school for this period, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority on your return. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23(1), the issuing of a Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £80.00 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days rising to £160.00 per child, per adult if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. (NB. In the case where the Penalty Notice has not been paid within 28 days of issue, the case may be escalated to prosecution in Magistrates Court for non-school attendance). If this is the second unauthorised leave taken within a three-year period, there will be no option of the lower amount and the Penalty Notice issued will incur a fine of £160. A national limit of two Penalty Notices can be issued to parents for the same child withing a rolling 3-year period. If a third offence is committed, then parents could be prosecuted for their child's absence with no option of paying a fine.

I have included a leaflet which has been issued by the Local Authority in relation to Penalty Notices for poor school attendance and unauthorised leave during term time.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

School.

Appendix 7 – Notice to Improve

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school or fails to attend regularly the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996.

You, «**FORENAME**» «**SURNAME**» are a parent/carer of «**Students_Name**», (called in this notice "the pupil") who is a registered pupil at «**School_Name**».

The school have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve «**Students_Name**»'s attendance, including:

- **Telephone calls.** The school contacted you every day your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
- **An Attendance Overview Letter.** The school wrote to you, letting you know about «**Students_Name**»'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
- **An Attendance Support Meeting Invite.** The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence, and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered to your family, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between «**START_DATE**» and «**END_DATE**» the pupil failed to attend regularly at «**School_Name**», which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have 30 school days (6 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. Please see fact sheet included with this warning, which explains when and how a penalty is issued.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact our team as soon as possible:

Contact Name

Contact details

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Job Title)

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 came 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.

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.

For example: a 5-day holiday would meet the national threshold. The 10-school week period can span different.

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.

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'.

Appendix 8 – Guidance to Head teachers on leave of absence

Example letter from Head teacher where no application received Dear

Name:

DOB:

School:

I have noted that had day's absence for the period..... I have reason to believe that this absence was due to a family holiday because. I have checked my records and can find no holiday application form from you regarding this absence.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Head teachers granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

If leave of absence is not authorised, and is taken without permission, the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent of £80 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £160. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. If this is the second offence within a three-year period, there will be no option of the lower amount and the Penalty Notice issued will incur a fine of £160. A national limit of two Penalty Notices can be issued to parents for the same child withing a rolling 3-year period. If a third offence is committed, then parents could be prosecuted for their child's absence with no option of paying a fine As I have not been given a reason for this absence, I have taken the decision to record it as unauthorised leave taken for a term time holiday.

Please contact me by..... to discuss if there are any special circumstances that you feel should be taken into consideration before I apply to the Local Authority for the issue of Penalty Notices.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Appendix 9 – Example letters for Head teachers regarding suspensions and exclusions

Example letter from Headteacher where a pupil has been cited in a public place in the first five days of suspension or exclusion

Dear Name:

DOB:

School:

Further to my letter dated [insert date] regarding the period of suspension/exclusion for your child, you were advised that it is an offence for a parent/carer to allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours for the first five days of suspension/exclusion, (Section 103 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006). Your son/daughter was seen

At [place]

On [date]

At [time]

Seen by [add details]

This was during the first five days of [name]'s suspension/exclusion from school. Before I request a Penalty Notice be issued to you, I invite you to provide me with the reason to support why your son/daughter was seen in a public place. Please either contact the school to speak with me directly or providing your reasons in writing within the next seven school days.

If I do not hear from you within that time, or if I do not consider your reasons to be a justified, a penalty notice will be sought under S.105 Education and Inspections Act 2006. A Penalty Notice imposes a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 days and 28 days. If you do not pay the Penalty Notice and the notice is not withdrawn, you will be prosecuted under S.103 Education and Inspections Act 2006 and could receive a fine of up to £2,500.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher

NB: All information regarding suspension and exclusion from school, can be found on the Southend-on-Sea City Council website or the Southend Learning Network.

Appendix 10 - Frequently asked questions – Taking Leave in Term Time:

- **Am I entitled to take my child out of school for a family holiday?**

No.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school or the alternative provision on a regular basis.

The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to “Fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at the school”

The amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove any reference to family holidays, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The amendments give parents no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time.

The head teacher and Governing Body will determine what the exceptional circumstances are.

- **If we decide to take a holiday during term time, what should we do?**

The parent/carer with whom the child resides must apply in writing to the school.

The letter/application must explain the exceptional circumstance surrounding the request for the leave of absence.

- **What will the school do then?**

The Head teacher will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not the application will be declined.

Only the head teacher has the power to approve leave of absence applications. When making the decision the protocols and criteria laid down in the school’s attendance policy must be followed.

Each academic year, schools inform parents/carers via a letter, newsletter or some other communication: that they may receive a Penalty Notice if their child has unauthorised absences in term time.

You will receive a written response from the Head teacher (or the Deputy) letting you know if your application has been approved. If the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Appendix 11 : Parents' responsibilities to ensure regular school attendance

Advice for Parents - Taken from Southend on Sea Schools Attendance Guidance for Schools and

Parents/Carers, Section 1.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age (age 5 – 16) receive a suitable full-time education. It is also important that parents encourage their child's regular and punctual attendance at school. If a child is registered at a school, then it is vital that they attend on a regular basis. This means parents must ensure their child attends school every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend school or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

It is important that everyone works together to help children obtain the best possible start in life with a good education. Parents should work in partnership with the school, notifying the school of the reason for any of their child's absences and highlighting any areas of concern they may have as soon as possible, so they can be addressed quickly.

If a parent has concerns about their child's attendance that the school is not responding to, they can talk to a member of the School Attendance team by emailing SchoolAttendance@Southend.gov.uk or telephoning 01702 212336.

If a parent, carer, young person, or child needs help and support, the school or School Attendance Team can advise and signpost you to the most appropriate support for your needs and access help as soon the needs arise.

Parent/Carer Advice

What is compulsory school age?

Compulsory school age starts the first day of term after a child's fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June, in the school year that a child reaches 16 years old. This is usually in year 11

When can my child miss a day from school?

The only times your child can miss school is:

- They are too ill to attend school.
- You have advance permission from the school (including holidays, religious observation, dental and medical appointments, study leave, or your school has made other arrangements to be educated off-site).
- Your child has been excluded from school (please refer to Southend's guidance on exclusion).

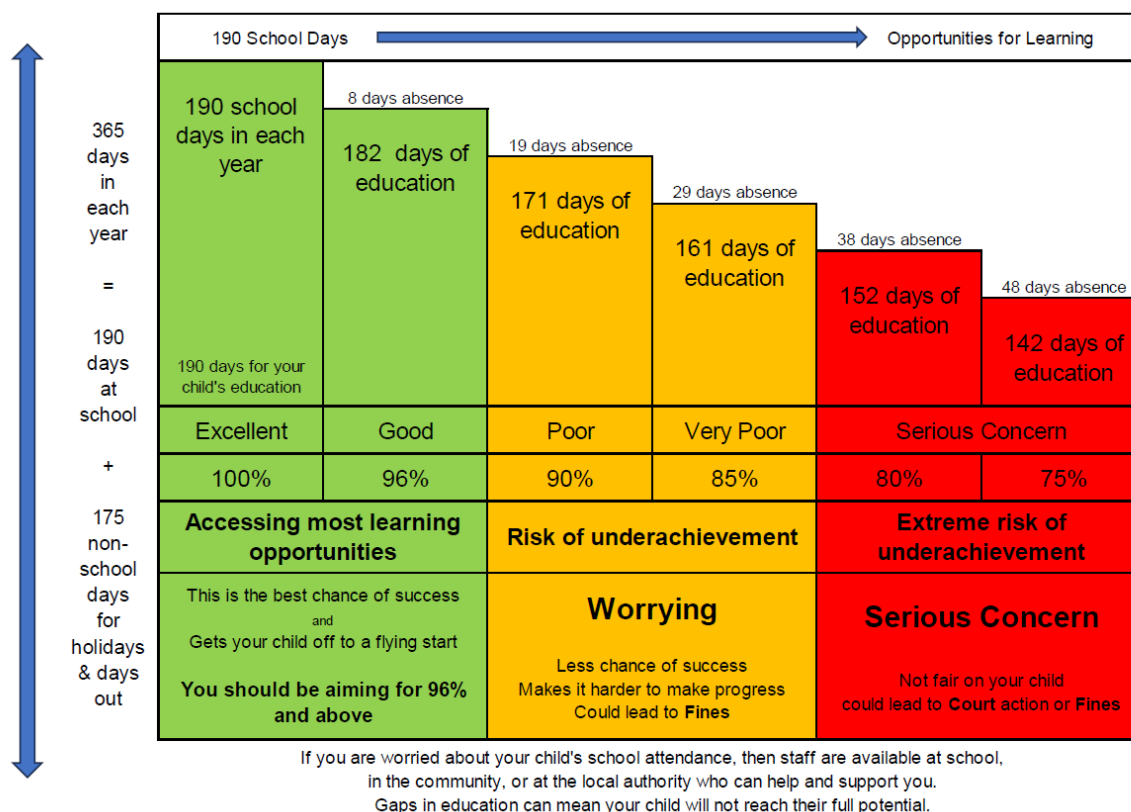
Where the school has not given advance permission and your child does not attend school, they will be recorded as absent. It is up to the Headteacher to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Parents can be given a fine if it is judged they can secure their child's regular attendance at school but are not taking responsibility for doing so, for example failing to engage in voluntary or supportive measures. The school will have tried to speak to you and will have sent warnings before any legal action is taken against you. Please use this opportunity to discuss any concerns you have and reasons why your child may not be attending school regularly. Working in partnership with the school as soon as possible is the best way to get support and improve the outcome for your child.

Can I book a holiday in term time?

There are 175 non-school days (13 weeks) where parents and carers can take family holidays and days out without missing time from school. Headteachers should only authorise holiday or leave during termtime in exceptional circumstances. If a parent believes their circumstances for requesting days off in term time are exceptional, they should put requests in writing to the school as soon as possible. If you go on a holiday without the authorisation of the Headteacher, you may be liable to pay a fine and/or be prosecuted for non-attendance.

Every day missed from school can impact on your child reaching their full potential. The below chart is a guide to days missed and levels of concern.



Does my child have to go to school if they are ill?

If your child is ill, there is information available to help you to decide if they are well enough to go to school. There are many occasions where your child may have symptoms or infections where they can go to school, such as coughs, colds and sore throats or infections such as conjunctivitis and head lice. If your child is well enough to go to school but is feeling under the weather or has an infection that could be passed on, such as head lice, always let their teacher or school office know. To help you decide whether they can go to school, read the NHS page, [Is my child too ill to go to school](#) or if you're unsure, speak to your child's school for advice.

Do I need to provide medical evidence to support my child's illness related absence?

If your child is too ill to attend school, schools will record these absences as authorised. In most cases medical evidence is not needed, but schools may ask you for evidence where:

- Your child is regularly absent because of mental or physical ill health, to assess how they can help your child by putting the right reasonable adjustments in place.
- In a small number of cases where they have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation cannot resolve the issue. In these cases, there is no requirement to provide medical evidence but where it isn't provided, schools are unlikely to authorise the absence.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. In many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible. Schools may also find it helpful to refer to DfE's non-statutory guidance on [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE guidance for schools February 2023](#)

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided.

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they are expected to work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil.

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases. Where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because it is complex or long term, schools can seek medical evidence to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in [Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)

If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the [NHS App](#)).

Talking to your child's school and sharing any challenges or concerns you have, asking for help and keeping them informed is always the best option. Remember, if your child is too ill to attend school, you should let the school know as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep them informed each day that they will be off until they return.

What should I do if my child needs a dental, optician, medical or mental health appointment in school time?

To avoid disruption to your child's attendance, appointments should not be booked during the school day whenever reasonably possible. Where you have no choice (such as a hospital appointment), you should ask the school in advance for a leave of absence and where possible send your child to school and collect them as close to the time of the appointment as possible and return them to school for the rest of the school day afterwards.

Remember, every day missed from school will impact your child's learning, development, and wider life chances beyond school.

National statistics indicate that on average, children who reached their expected standard in reading, writing and math's in their key stage 2 SATs tests had only 6 to 7 days absent from school each year

For young People achieving grades 9 to 5 in English and Maths GCSE in year 11 had an average up to 7 days absence overall. For more information visit the [links between absence and attainment](#)

Impact of absence			
Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

My child is struggling to attend because of an issue in school. Who can help?

The first step is to talk to your child's school about why your child is missing school, and what help the school can give. You should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible whilst waiting for help and support to be put into place. School will advise you of who you can contact for help, including your child's teacher, tutor, or head of year. The school will also have a senior leader responsible for attendance. You can find out who this is by looking in the school's attendance policy on its website or if you are unsure, ask your school's reception or school office for advice on who is best to talk to.

If your child is struggling to attend because of something that is happening at school, the school is expected to work with you (and your child if they are old enough) to overcome the issues. You should agree a set of joint actions with the school that you have all developed together to support your child. This will often include a commitment to support you and your child by working together or helping you to access support services in exchange for an agreement from you (and your child if they are old enough to understand) to take part in the support offered. The school will also arrange times for you to come together to review these actions and your child's progress.

Depending on the reasons for your child's absence, this may take the form of an action plan, a Supporting Families plan, or a parenting contract.

My child is struggling to attend because of an issue at home or getting to school. Who can help me?

Again, talking to the school should be your first step. Schools are best placed and expected to help you access the support you need. This could be making an appointment to speak to a school nurse, helping you contact your local housing team, signposting you to local support for child or adult wellbeing and mental health services or accessing advice with assistance for travelling to school.

Southend-on-Sea's School Attendance Team can also work with you and the school to access the support you need if the issues you or your child are facing are beyond the remit of the school. If there are lots of reasons for your child's absence, services are expected to work together to support you and your child.

All services open to you and your family, including your school, should work together on a single action plan with an identified lead worker to help and support you. In many cases this will be a member of school staff, but it might be a professional from a council service such as a school attendance officer, SEND coordinator, education access advisor, supporting family's practitioner, youth justice worker or social worker. Where the needs of your child are mostly linked to their health and wellbeing, this could be a local healthcare worker such as a child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) practitioner, school nurse or consultant. In exchange, you are expected to agree and take part in accessing the support once it has been put in place. It is advisable to meet annually with your child's school to review what is and isn't working, involving your child if possible. While waiting for help, you should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible.

My child has a long-term illness, special educational needs or a disability that is impacting their attendance. What help is available?

If your child is regularly absent from school because of illness (regardless of whether it is mental or physical) or special educational needs or a disability, they have the same right to a suitable full-time education as any other child. You should work with your child's school to discuss any reasons for absence and their additional needs and make sure the right support is in place. All schools are expected to provide support in these cases. More information can be found in your child's school's policy on how they support pupils with medical conditions.

Schools are expected to:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.
- Ensure your child receives the right pastoral care and in certain cases consider a time-limited phased return to school where appropriate, for example for those who have anxiety about school attendance.
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Work jointly with other services including your local council and health services.
- For pupils with a long-term medical condition, either physical or mental health, schools are also expected to make attendance support a key feature of any individual HealthCare plan.
- For pupils with Education, Health, and Care plans (EHCPs), schools must ensure access to any provision outlined within their plan

To make this work, it is important that you are open and work with your child's school by sharing written information. This will help agree the right support and take an active part in agreeing and implementing the solution

In most cases this will be sufficient, but no child should be out of school without appropriate education, especially where it is known that they are unable to access school for 15 school days or more. Where your child is unable to attend school but able to access learning suitable for their current health needs, speak to your school about accessing an AV1 robot. Where suitable for your child, on days where they are too unwell or anxious to attend school, but well enough to access some lessons, they can access the learning taking place in the classroom through the eyes of an AV1 robot. This allows your child to see and speak to their friends, peers and class teachers, whilst at home or in hospital. Where this isn't appropriate and additional support is needed, your child's school should refer to Southend's Education Access Team who will arrange a meeting with you, your child, your child's school and lead medical or mental health practitioner to agree a plan and access to a suitable alternative education for your child for the period they are unable to attend school.

If your child has an Education, Health, and Care plan, and is out of school for more than 15 days, your child's school should also inform your child's SEND Coordinator responsible for your child's plan at your local council. This is to ensure that they are aware of the situation and to seek their support for your child where necessary

Where can I get help if my child is too anxious to go to school?

Attending school usually helps to protect your child's mental health, for a range of reasons including giving them a chance to be with friends and to benefit from learning. However, some children can be anxious or worried about going to school, particularly around the start of the new year or joining a new school or class. This is a normal emotion, and not necessarily indicative of an underlying mental health condition

If your child's anxiety continues and becomes an attendance issue, you should speak to your child's school together with your child about why they are anxious and what can be done to help them. You can find some useful advice at [Young Minds](#), to help work through likely reasons together with your child, what to do and how to make sure that you get the right support if there are more serious issues. You can also make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available in conjunction with school.

Definition of a parent-in-law

[Section 576 Education Act 1996](#) defines a 'parent' as:

- All biological parents of the child (even if they do not have Parental Responsibility and even if the child does not reside with them).
- any person who is not a parent but has Parental Responsibility for the child (for example through a Residence Order, Child Arrangements Order, Special Guardianship Order, Step-Parental Responsibility Order, Adoption Order or Care Order).
- someone who has care of the child.

A person typically takes 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.

Therefore, all these people have the duty to ensure a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education and as such, all could receive legal sanctions if the child or young person does not attend school

Further Advice

For more information on accessing support to help your child attend school please visit The Children's Commissioners advice on [working together to improve school attendance](#).

For more information about your rights and responsibilities, along with possible legal sanctions for not attending school, please visit the [Child Law Advice](#) website.

For general parent attendance enquiries please email the School Attendance Team on SchoolAttendance@southend.gov.uk

APPENDIX 12 – Should I send my child to school

<div> <div>What to do Advice on childhood illnesses</div> <div>Go to school; if needed get treatment as shown</div> <div>Can be catching. Some restrictions for school attendance</div> <div>Don't go to school and see the GP</div> </div>				
What it's called	What it's like	Going to school	Getting treatment	More advice
Chicken Pox	Rash begins as small, red, flat spots that develop into itchy fluid-filled blisters	●	Pharmacy	Back to school 5 days after on-set of the rash
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	Fever, tiredness. Raised, red, rash that starts on the face and spreads downwards.	●	G.P.	Back to school 6 days from on-set of rash
Glandular fever	high temperature, sore throat; usually more painful than any before and swollen glands	●	G.P.	Child needs to be physically able to concentrate
Hand, foot & mouth disease	Fever, sore throat, headache, small painful blisters inside the mouth on tongue and gums (may appear on hands and feet)	●	G.P.	Only need to stay off ill feeling too ill for school
Head lice	Itchy scalp (may be worse at night)	●	Pharmacy	
Impetigo	Clusters of red bumps or blisters surrounded by area of redness	●	G.P.	Back to school when lesions crust or 48 hours after start of antibiotics
Measles	Fever, cough, runny nose, and watery inflamed eyes. Small red spots with white or bluish white centres in the mouth, red, blotchy rash	●	G.P.	Back to school 4 days from on-set of rash
Ringworm	Red ring shaped rash, may be itchy rash may be dry and scaly or wet and crusty	●	G.P.	
Scabies	Intense itching, pimple – like rash Itching and rash may be all over the body but commonly between the fingers, wrists, elbows, arm	●	G.P.	Back to school after first treatment
Shingles	Pain, itching, or tingling along the affected nerve pathway. Blister-type rash	●	G.P.	Only stay off school if rash is weeping and cannot be covered
Sickness bug/ diarrhoea	Stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea	●	Pharmacy	See GP if symptoms persist after 48 hours
Threadworms	Intense itchiness around anus	●	Pharmacy	Ensure good hand hygiene
Tonsillitis	Intense Sore throat	●	Pharmacy	See GP if temperature lasts more than 48 hours or cannot swallow
Whooping cough	Violent coughing, over and over, until child inhales with "whooping" sound to get air into lungs	●	G.P.	Back to school after 5 days of antibiotics or 21 days from onset of illness

See www.patient.co.uk for further information on each of these conditions

This leaflet has been produced in partnership between



This information is a guide and has been checked by health professionals however, if you are unsure about your child's wellbeing we recommend you contact your pharmacy or GP to check.

APPENDIX 13 STM template letters

LETTER 1 – Fall below 98%

RE: Attendance for <Pupil Name>

In order to maintain high attendance and punctuality, we regularly review the school registers. This also helps to identify pupils who may need some support in improving their attendance or punctuality.

We are concerned that <PUPIL NAME> has only <figure> % attendance and is falling below what we would expect of students which is 98%. May I take this opportunity to remind you that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. We would request that if there are any issues that are affecting <PUPIL NAME>'s attendance that you inform myself so we can best support <PUPIL NAME> and your family.

I would be grateful if I could call on your continued support in this matter and please feel free to contact me at any time.

I thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs E Sedgwick
Attendance Officer**

LETTER 2 – Below 95%

RE: Attendance for <Pupil Name>

In order to maintain high attendance and punctuality, we regularly review the school registers. This also helps to identify pupils who may need some support in improving their attendance or punctuality.

We are concerned that <PUPIL NAME> has only <figure> % attendance compared to the school average of 95%. This is now falling to a level we find really concerning. May I take this opportunity to remind you that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. We would request that if there are any issues that are affecting <PUPIL NAME>'s attendance that you inform myself so we can best support <PUPIL NAME>.

I would be grateful if I could call on your continued support in this matter and please feel free to contact me at any time.

I thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs E Sedgwick
Attendance Officer**

LETTER 3 - Level 1 Sample Letter

RE: Attendance for <Pupil Name>

In order to maintain high attendance and punctuality, we regularly review the school registers. This also helps to identify pupils who may need some support in improving their attendance or punctuality.

We are concerned that <PUPIL NAME> has only <figure> % attendance compared to the school average of 95% and below 90% which is a huge concern. May I take this opportunity to remind you that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly. We would request that if there are any issues that are affecting <PUPIL NAME>'s attendance that you inform myself so we can best support <PUPIL NAME>. We are getting to a concerning stage that means we may need to get the Locally Authority Attendance Officer with Southend City Council involved, if <his/her> attendance doesn't improve. May I remind you that 90% means that your <son/daughter> has missed over 19 days of school.

I would be grateful if I could call on your continued support in this matter and please feel free to contact me at any time.

I thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs E Sedgwick
Attendance Officer**

LETTER 4 - Level 2 Sample Letter

RE: Attendance for <Pupil Name>

In order to maintain high attendance and punctuality, we regularly review the school registers. This also helps to identify pupils who may need some support in improving their attendance or punctuality.

We are concerned that <PUPIL NAME> has only <percentage> % attendance compared to the school average of 95%.

As <PUPIL NAME>'s attendance is not at the levels we would expect at St Thomas More, you are invited to attend a meeting with myself and <PUPIL NAME>, our Local Authority Attendance Officer on <DATE> at <TIME> to discuss the problems that are affecting <PUPIL NAME>'s attendance in school.

I would be grateful if you could contact me to confirm you are able to attend this meeting. I thank you for your continued support in this matter and please feel free to contact me at any time to discuss any problems that <PUPIL NAME> may be experiencing that may affect full attendance.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs E Sedgwick
Attendance Officer**

LETTER 5 – Request for Medical Evidence

Dear *(Name of Parent)*

We understand that some absence due to illness is unavoidable. However, as your child attendance is below 90%, we ask that you provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, appointment card, or copy of a prescription for absence that is due to illness to enable us to authorise any future absence due to illness.

We will continue to monitor *(pupil name)*'s attendance. If you wish to discuss your child's attendance please contact the school.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Sedgwick
Attendance Officer

APPENDIX 14 – House Points for Attendance

WEEKLY

10 points to be awarded to the top form in each year group. They will also get a mention in Contact on a weekly basis and this will also be sent to form tutors each week.

MONTHLY

Along with the monthly certificate for the form with the highest attendance merit points will be given to the winning form PLUS any form over 97%.

100 points for the winning form

20 points for each form with over 97% attendance for that month!

TERMLY

Along with termly attendance cup being awarded to the form with the highest attendance at presentations assembly there will be merit points awarded for the top 3 spots.

1st – 250 points

2nd – 150 points

3rd – 50 points