



St Thomas More Catholic Primary school, Saffron Walden

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy No. STM-005

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Introduction and Background

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

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

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

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

The DfE's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance should also be read in conjunction with the Attendance Policy for specific elements: [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#)

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

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

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

Promoting Regular Attendance

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

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

Name Ms A Lipscombe

Email address or contact details

admin@stmsw.co.uk

The governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is Mrs Luisa Bonomo-Jackson.

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

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

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters and events;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

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

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

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

Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. All pupils who have attendance levels of 90% or below are considered to be a persistent absentee.

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

Absence Procedures

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

Name Mrs D Barns

Email address or contact details

admin@stmsw.co.uk

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

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

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9:00 am, when our register closes;
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a

voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;

- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00 am, unless the reason for absence is likely to span over the course of more than one day e.g in instances of vomiting/diarrhea (48 hour rule) or chicken pox etc.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (annex E).

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

If absence continues we will:

- a) Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95% and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- b) Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Senior Attendance Champion, Mental Health Champion or SENCO.
- c) Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- d) Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- e) Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can sometimes lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the morning and the afternoon registers for the school day for all pupils at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School are:

- a) Gates open: 8.30am
- b) Registration starts: 8.45am
- c) Registration closes: 9.15am
- d) Registration for pm starts and closes: 1:30pm
- e) End of the school day: 3.15pm

How we manage lateness:

- a) The school day starts at **8.30am** when children can begin to come into school;
- b) Registers are taken at **8.45am**;
- c) Children arriving after **8.45am** are required to come into school via the school office accompanied by a parent/carer and provide a reason for their lateness, which is recorded;
- d) At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence;
- e) The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the class teacher/or in continued cases a member of the Senior Leadership Team, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

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

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

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

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

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

Name: Ms A Lipscombe

Email address or contact details: admin@stmsw.co.uk

Local Authority attendance support services

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

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

School Attendance and the Law

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

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

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

National Framework for Penalty Notices

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

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

See Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In

addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they do not have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave of absence, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave. Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is likely that penalty notices will be requested, in line with the National Framework and Essex Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence (including grandparents or other family or friends).

The headteacher/school may discuss the leave of absence request with other education settings and/or the Local Authority to determine any exceptional circumstances.

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

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving *St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, other than at the end of year 6*, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

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

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

admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

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

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

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19th August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e8ae343649a2001aed63aa/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

All pupils

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

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.	Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.

Persistently absent pupils

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

Severely absent pupils

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

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

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

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners, understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should: - Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. - Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. - Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need.

Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance. Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.	Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils. Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.	Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care. (LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will: • Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school- whenever they live or are educated. • Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. • Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. • Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.

Monitoring

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

Annex B

ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT: PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

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

Annex C



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

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

Who may be fined?

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

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

First Offence

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

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

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

National Threshold

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

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

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

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

Second Offence

(within 3 years)

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

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

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.

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

Annex D – Illness Absence Guidance

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

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

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

Annex E – NHS and Essex County Council Guide to Childhood Illness

[file:///N:/DS23 7975%20What%20to%20do%20-%20child%20illness%20A3.pdf](file:///N:/DS23%207975%20What%20to%20do%20-%20child%20illness%20A3.pdf)

Annex F – Essex Template Letters

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Applicant,

All schools **by law** must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance relating to school attendance. They must use the appropriate national attendance or absence code, and follow the criteria set out within the guidance. The statutory guidance states:

- A leave of absence **must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances and must be requested in advance**
- A leave of absence must be requested **in advance** by a parent who the pupil normally lives with
- Schools must judge **each application individually**, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request
- Where a leave of absence is granted, **the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school**
- **A need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance**
- A school **cannot** grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, the leave of absence should not be granted
- Where this guidance refers to a parent, the school and/or local authority will need to decide which adult(s) is most appropriate. Generally, parents include:
 - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - All those who have parental responsibility
 - Those who have day to day responsibility for the child

Please note all schools are expected to regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.



Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 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
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

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

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, 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 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 a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child, a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below (further information can be attached if required).

Pupil's full name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Year Group	
Class / Registration	
Pupil's full address and postcode	

First date of absence	
Last date of absence	
Date of return to school	
Number of school days absent	

Please be aware, as per our school's attendance policy and the Essex published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the parent/carer the child normally lives with or by a person wishing to take the child out of school during term-time who is also considered to have parental responsibility; and
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

Please also note that, if on the rare occasion circumstances are deemed exceptional by the head teacher, the duration your child is permitted to be away from school may only be determined by the head teacher.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance:

Reason for request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional
(Further details may be attached to this form)

--

If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please detail their name/s and which school/s they attend below

Pupil's name, name of school and school telephone number:

Full name of person making request (note requests must be made by a parent who the pupil normally lives with or can be made by another person wishing to take the child out of school during term-time, provided they have parental responsibility.

Relationship to child

Email address	
Full address and postcode (if different from child's above)	
Signature	
Date	

Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

School Response

Dear	(Insert parent title, forename, and surname)
Copy sent to	(Insert parent title, forename, and surname)

Re: Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Date of response from school	
Date application received by school	

Pupil's full name	
Pupil's Date of Birth	
Year Group, Class / Registration	
Pupil's full address and postcode	
Pupil's percentage attendance year to date	
Number of sessions absent this academic year (total)	
Number of which are authorised	
Number of which are unauthorised	

Has this pupil had any previously recorded unauthorised leave of absence?	
Was a Penalty Notice Fine requested as a result?	
Are you aware of <u>any</u> Penalty Notice Fines that the parent or parents may have previously received for this pupil and/or a sibling/child for whom they hold parental/day to day care and responsibility?	

School response to parent/s request for leave of absence

Number of requested sessions authorised	
Number of requested sessions unauthorised	
Date pupil required to return to school	

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, schools may refer to the Local Authority for legal action. Please find attached information regarding Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance.

Headteacher Signature	
Headteacher Name	
Date	

Essex AUTHORISING leave of absence template letter

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear **Title, Full Forename and Surname,**

RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)

I refer to your application dated **DAY DATE MONTH YEAR** for leave of absence for **CHILD FULL NAME** to be absent from **DAY DATE MONTH YEAR** (first day of expected absence), until **DAY DATE MONTH YEAR** (last day of expected absence), a total of **ENTER NUMBER** school days.

You will already be aware from our school's attendance policy and the Essex published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

3. An application has been made in advance; **and**
4. There are exceptional circumstances.

Following due consideration, I can agree your request on this occasion. Please be advised this will be recorded as an absence but authorised.

I must warn you that, if you do take your child out of school in future, the absences may not be authorised, and the Local Authority may take legal action, as outlined in the application form. For your convenience, please find attached a further copy of the summary sheet from Essex County Council outlining key information to help parents understand the National Framework for legal intervention.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for "penalty notices" for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

To confirm, this matter will be recorded on your child/ren's school record.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname
Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXXX



Essex County Council

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 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
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

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

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, 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 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 a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

Essex unauthorising leave of absence – no application made / reported as illness

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)

I have noted that CHILD FULL NAME was absent from DAY DATE MONTH YEAR to DAY DATE MONTH YEAR, a total of XX school days absent, and we have reason to believe that this absence was due to a family holiday because *****.
OR I have noted that CHILD FULL NAME has been absent since DAY DATE MONTH YEAR, and we have reason to believe that this absence is due to a family holiday because *****.

You will already be aware from our school's attendance policy and the Essex published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance; **and**
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

We have no record of an application for leave and have therefore taken the decision to record it as unauthorised leave taken for a term time holiday. It is our intention to refer the matter to Essex County Council for legal action in line with the National Framework as outlined below.

Please contact me by DAY DATE MONTH YEAR to share any circumstances related to this absence which you believe to be exceptional. Should I not hear from you by the date stipulated above, or should the circumstances related to this absence not be deemed exceptional, I will refer the matter to the Local Authority for legal action.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for "penalty notices" for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)

I have noted that CHILD FULL NAME was reported absent due to illness from DAY DATE MONTH YEAR to DAY DATE MONTH YEAR, a total of XX school days. However, we have reason to believe that this absence was due to a family holiday.

You are now required to either:

- provide medical evidence in support of the reported illness; or
- share any circumstances related to this absence that you believe to be exceptional.

This information is required by DAY DATE MONTH YEAR - Should evidence not be provided by this date, or should any reported circumstances related to this absence not be deemed exceptional, I will refer the matter to the Local Authority for legal action.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for “penalty notices” for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXX



Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 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
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

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

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, 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 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 a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

Essex letter template – failed to return from leave of absence

Full Name – Title, Full Forename, Surname

Address

Address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

Child's Full Forename and Surname

DOB: Insert Child's full date of birth

I refer to your application dated DAY DATE MONTH YEAR for leave of absence for CHILD FULL NAME to be absent from DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (first day of expected absence), until DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (last day of expected absence), a total of ENTER NUMBER school days. Our records show CHILD FULL NAME has failed to return to school following the leave.

Should CHILD FULL NAME not return by DAY DATE MONTH YEAR, they are at risk of losing their school place and you will need to reapply. IF APPLICABLE - Please note that we have an active waiting list for your child's year group, and should you fail to ensure that your child returns to school by DAY DATE MONTH YEAR then their place will be offered to another child.

Please contact us as a matter of urgency to confirm your intentions.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

Essex unauthorising leave of absence template letter

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)

I refer to your application dated DAY DATE MONTH YEAR for leave of absence for CHILD FULL NAME to be absent from DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (first day of expected absence), until DAY DATE MONTH YEAR (last day of expected absence), a total of ENTER NUMBER school days.

You will already be aware from our school's attendance policy and the Essex published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

3. An application has been made in advance; **and**
4. There are exceptional circumstances.

Following due consideration, I am unable to agree to your request as the reason provided, i.e. ADD REASON provided by parent is not considered exceptional.

I must warn you that, if you do take your child out of school for this time, the absences will not be authorised, and the Local Authority may take legal action, as outlined in the application form. For your convenience, please find attached a further copy of the summary sheet from Essex County Council outlining key information to help parents understand the National Framework for legal intervention.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for "penalty notices" for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

The matter will be recorded on your child/ren's school record.

If you would like to meet with me to discuss this matter and/or you believe there are exceptional circumstances which mean the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday period, please contact me to arrange an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher



Essex County Council

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 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
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

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

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, 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 the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court

- **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **finest of up to £2,500**
- Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

School Attendance Notice to Improve

(Please read this letter carefully)

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

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, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence under s.444 Education Act 1996. If your child is a registered pupil at an alternative provision in the circumstances set out in section 444ZA of the Education Act 1996, the child's parent may be guilty of an offence.

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.
- **Letters and/or emails dated XXXXX.** 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.
- **Inviting you to (an) Attendance Support Meeting(s).** The school invited you to (a) meeting(s) to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. Our school attendance policy makes clear the consequences, should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and/or you did not effectively engage with the support offered.
- **Devising an Attendance Contract** designed to support you to ensure that «Students_Name»'s attendance improved and to prevent further unauthorised absences from being recorded.
- **Worked through the "Let's Talk: We miss you" toolkit** questionnaires with you to help us all to understand the reasons behind «Students_Name»'s absence and to put in place support to remove any barriers to regular school attendance.
- **Referrals to the following support services:**
 - INSERT NAMES OF SUPPORT SERVICES TO WHICH REFERRALS HAVE BEEN MADE

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

You now have 6 school weeks in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any further unauthorised absences recorded. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be issued, or your case may be put forward to the local authority for them to consider prosecution under section 444 1/1A Education Act 1996.

Please note that, if you have received previous penalty notices in relation to the unauthorised absence patterns of a child for whom you hold parental responsibility/day-to-day care and responsibility or you have previously been prosecuted under section 444 1/1A Education Act 1996, you may not be eligible for further penalty notices and your case may automatically proceed to prosecution.

Please visit the Essex County Council website and search for “penalty notices” for more information about the penalty notice fine levels and maximum penalty notice limits which are detailed within the Essex Code of Conduct.

N.B. Your case may be put forward for a penalty notice/prosecution as soon as a further unauthorised absence is recorded for «STUDENT_NAME**».**

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please do not hesitate to contact our team as soon as possible using the contact details below:

Contact Name: **xxxx**

Email address: **xxxx**

Telephone number: **xxxx**

Yours sincerely

Forename and Surname
Position held
School Name

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

Failure to attend - School Attendance Contract Meeting

We are disappointed that you did not attend the arranged Attendance Contract Meeting or contact us to discuss an alternative date/time.

PUPIL NAME's attendance continues to decline, and it is having a negative impact on their ability to benefit from the educational opportunities available to them. As previously communicated, this is not just crucial for their learning, but also their wellbeing and wider development. PUPIL NAME needs to attend school regularly and on time every day. PUPIL NAME's attendance record is enclosed/attached for your information.

Please contact us using the contact details below by DATE so that we may agree a date and time to hold the Attendance Contract Meeting. Should contact not be made by DATE, then your non-engagement will be noted, and we will consider all available options to secure engagement and improvement in PUPIL NAME's attendance. As per our attendance policy, this may include a Notice to Improve, or a referral to the local authority for either a penalty notice or prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance Contract Meeting

Further to our communication DATED whereby we invited you to a School Attendance Contract Meeting, we would like to thank you for getting in contact to re-arrange the meeting date/time. To confirm, the below details were agreed in conversation with yourself on DATE at TIME

Attendance Contract Meeting details

Date:

Time:

Location:

We look forward to meeting with you, so that we may listen, understand, and work together to explore, and formalise relevant support. It is hoped that this meeting will resolve any attendance concerns so that PUPIL NAME can fully benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Further to our discussion on DATE, we want to thank you for engaging with us. We hope the support, which we have designed and agreed together will help PUPIL NAME to attend school regularly and benefit from all the educational opportunities available to them. Again, this is not just about their learning, but their wider wellbeing and development. We may need to come together regularly to ensure the provision/adjustments agreed continue to address concerns and meet NAME's needs, please therefore do not hesitate to contact us.

As advised, the aims of the conversation were to:

- Understand the reasons for absence and any concerns, so that the right support is put in place where applicable
- Discuss working together placing the pupil's best interests at the heart of our support offer
- Build/maintain trusted, strong working relationships between pupils, families, and the school
- Put support in place that focuses on the individual pupil voice and wellbeing
- Have open and honest discussions to facilitate the right support
- Signpost to wider/further support and make any necessary referral/s
- Document referrals and actions, noting who the lead practitioner will be, and who will take forward each action (documentation of this discussion is important, as is ensuring relevant parties are made aware of any concerns and support discussed to ensure continuity of support by all parties)

During the discussion, consideration was given to making referrals to a variety of services. You agreed to referrals to the following service:

- LIST ALL SERVICES AGREED e.g. Team Around the Family Service, School Nursing Team, CAMHS, Family Solutions, Families in Focus, Youth Service, Etc.

You did not agree that referrals to the following services would be beneficial at this time:

- List those discussed but not agreed

Please find attached/enclosed the notes taken during the meeting and supporting documents discussed. Below is also a summary of support / actions agreed during the discussion.

Adjustments / Support agreed

LIST ADJUSTMENTS / ACTIONS, including who is responsible for the action, examples below, can be bullet pointed or using table format

Example:

Adjustment / Action	Responsible	By	Completed
School to arrange toilet pass	Name of school representative and position	DATE (next school day)	
Parent to contact GP to discuss...	Parent(s) name(s)		
Parent to feedback result of GP conversation	Parent(s) name(s)		
Completion of Let's Talk... We Miss You: Best practice and guidance for maximising school attendance (PDF, 2.09MB)	School rep name completing, pupil name and parent(s) name(s)		
School to organise a Team Around the Family Meeting			
School to discuss anonymously at Early Help Drop-In			
School and family to discuss with SENCO – if SEN Support / EHCP – in place or potentially required			
Medical report to support a referral to Education Access	Parent(s) name(s)		
School to discuss concerns with the schools named Inclusion Partner	Name of school representative and position		
School to ensure all relevant school-based parties are aware of agreed adjustments. School to circulate to (delete/add as appropriate): • Form Tutor • Head of Year • Attendance Officer • SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) • Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy • Pastoral Support Team • If a Looked after child, or previously looked after – Designated Teacher • Senior Attendance Champion	Name of school representative and position		

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname
Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname
Full address
Full address
Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Further to our previous communications, we are disappointed that you did not attend the pre-arranged meeting or contact us to re-arrange. As such, we are writing to clarify both the Department for Education's and our expectations regarding regular school attendance. Please find enclosed/attached the Department for Education's [guide for parents on school attendance](#), which explains your legal responsibilities as parents, including ensuring that your child attends school regularly, and on time. This means your child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend school or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Please note, when determining if your child is too ill to attend, both parents and school staff should consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (enclosed/attached).

For more information and clarification relating to our school attendance processes and the support available, please refer to our school's attendance policy which is available on the school website via [INSERT LINK](#). If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

Due to the fact we have been unable to engage you in our offers of support and PUPIL NAME continues to have absences recorded (please find attached/enclosed PUPIL NAME's updated attendance record), we will now raise our concerns with external partners to seek their advice and guidance relating to the options available to us. Once we have taken advice from our partners, you may be invited to further meetings which we strongly encourage you to engage with along with any offers of support. During this time, we will continue to work with PUPIL NAME to try to resolve the attendance concerns, and you are always welcome to contact us so that we can listen to, and understand, from your perspective, any barriers to attendance, and offer support as appropriate. Please find below our contact details.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname
Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Attendance on-going decline - Discussion Pro-Forma

Discussion Aims and Information – for both schools and families

- To understand reasons for absence and any concerns so that the right support is put in place where applicable
- A discussion to aid working together with the pupil's best interests at the heart
- A supportive discussion which seeks to build/maintain trusted, strong, working relationships between pupils, families, and the school
- Pupil voice and wellbeing should be the focus, and any support put in place should reflect this
- To put the right support in place, where necessary, it is important that all parties are open and honest during this discussion
- Signposting for wider/further support should be considered and referral/s made, as appropriate
- Referrals and actions should be clearly documented, noting who the lead practitioner will be, and who will take forward each action
- Documentation of this discussion is important, as is ensuring relevant parties are made aware of any concerns and support discussed to ensure continuity of support by all parties
- Please note, any adjustments or support should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parent(s)
- It is important to understand that this may be an on-going discussion, and there may be a need to come together regularly to ensure our approach continues to address any concerns
- Consideration should be given to the support resources below:
 - Team Around the Family Meetings (TAFs)
 - Team Around the Family Support Officers (TAFSOs)
 - Early Help Drop In
 - [Let's Talk... We Miss You: Best practice and guidance for maximising school attendance \(PDF, 2.09MB\)](#)
 - [AST SEMH Checklist \(XLS, 122KB\)](#) – Supporting schools to support their pupils
 - Please also look at more specialist support where appropriate
- In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interest, school and family may wish to consider a temporary part-time timetable to meet individual needs, to enable the pupil to access as much education as possible;
 - Please note all relevant parties must agree to a part-time timetable
 - Schools must ensure they adhere to the relevant statutory guidance relating to part-time timetables

Copies to be circulated as agreed as part of any internal processes, with any concerns, support and interventions highlighted. Examples of colleagues who may benefit:

- Form Tutor
- Head of Year
- Attendance Officer
- SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinators)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy
- Pastoral Support Team
- If a Looked after child, or previously looked after – Designated Teacher
- Senior Attendance Champion

Supporting our children and young people to engage

Date	
Name of person completing form	
Position of person completing form	
Pupil Name	
Pupil Date of birth	
Pupil Year Group	
Form tutor / Class teacher	
SENCO (if applicable)	
Head of year (if applicable)	
School's named Senior Attendance Champion	

Documents to provide	Provided (tick as appropriate)
Hard copies of pupil's attendance record for discussion provided to all attendees	
Hard copy of school's attendance policy for parent(s) and pupil (where applicable, if applicable note in next column who so parent(s) and pupil's names)	
Hard copy of DfE external document template (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk) given to parent(s) and pupil (where applicable)	
Attendance and learning hours lost poster	
Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain poster	
Latest school report / attainment progress documentation (impact)	

Number of days and sessions missed due to absence	xx days absence totalling xx sessions missed
Number of sessions authorised absence and authorised absence percentage	xx sessions of absence authorised xx% of authorised absence recorded
Number of sessions unauthorised absence and unauthorised absence percentage	xx sessions of absence unauthorised xx% of unauthorised absence recorded
Total number of sessions and days attributed to illness absence	xx sessions of illness absence (I Code) xx% of overall absence recorded as illness (I Code)
Is punctuality a concern? If yes, detail how many L codes and U codes are recorded and total minutes late (to registration / lessons)	xx late (L) codes recorded xx unauthorised late (U) codes recorded xx total number of minutes late

How do you feel your child is finding school currently?	
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etc.? Are they struggling with or worried about at anything at school? Is there anything the school might be able to do to help? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
Is there anything you as parents have concerns about in relation to school – subjects, friendships, teachers etc.? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
Is there anything happening outside of school that may be affecting your child's engagement with school? Is everything ok at home? Do you or your child require any support from us that we have not already discussed? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	

Additional Notes

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Referrals and Signposting considerations

- Depending on the discussion, it may be appropriate to offer additional internal support and/or external support
- It may be that school signpost or make referrals themselves to support the pupil/family
- Referrals and signposting to agencies should be discussed, documented, and permission sought
- It is important that all offers of support are documented, including whether declined or accepted and by whom

Please find below some of the support available

Please note this list is not exhaustive printed, the links will need to be deleted and referenced separately in the notes where you have signposted to the service for example.

[Let's Talk... We Miss You: Best practice and guidance for maximising school attendance \(PDF, 2.09MB\)](#)

- [School attendance difficulties rating scale \(Word, 36KB\)](#)
- [School attendance difficulties rating scale \(XLS, 32KB\)](#)

[Essex Support Directory](#)

[SEMH Support Portal](#)

[Essex Directory of Support](#)

[Essex Frontline](#)

[Essex Directory \(essexmap.co.uk\)](#)

[Essex Wellbeing Service](#)

[Essex Child/Pupil and Family Support and Wellbeing Service](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service](#)

[Essex Youth Service](#)

[Autism Support | PACT For Autism | England](#)

[Families in focus](#)

[Supporting your Neurodiverse children – booklet](#)

[The Power Project | Child First Trust](#)

[Early help support for families - advice, guidance and Team Around a Family meetings \(TAFs\)](#)

[Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service](#)

[Essex Directory of Services](#)

[SEND Support - Essex Local Offer](#)

[Essex SENDIASS website - Support for SEND](#)

[For early help advice, email - TAFSO@essex.gov.uk](#)

[Early Help Drop-In Sessions and Consultations](#)

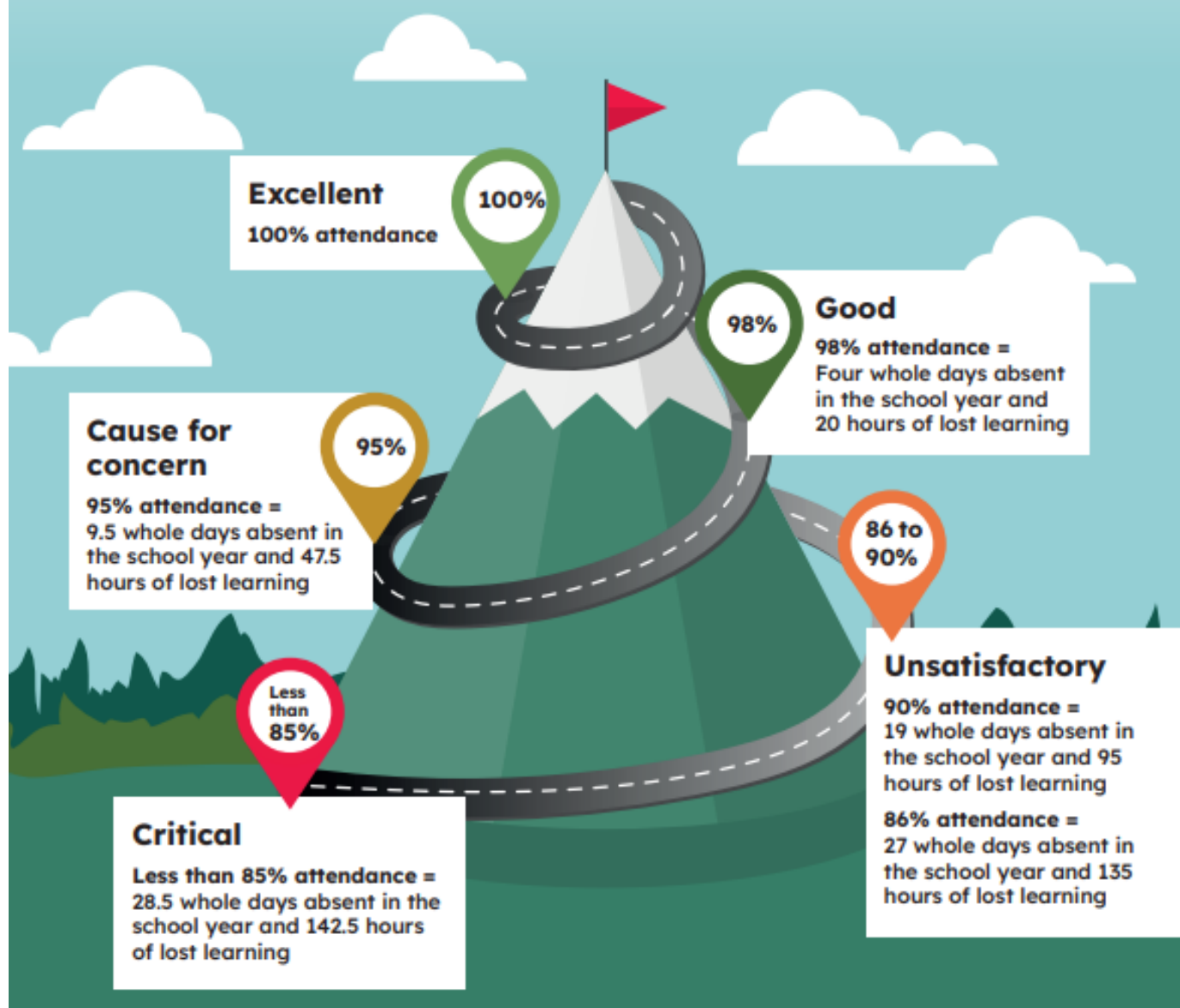
[Find out more about putting together an early help plan](#)

[Early Help Resources for practitioners](#)

Categorising attendance and learning hours lost

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance (days)	Whole days absent	Lost learning hours	Level of concern
Excellent	100%	190	0	0	Green
	99%	188	2	10	
Good	98%	186	4	20	Green
	97%	184	6	30	
	96%	182.5	7.5	37.5	
Cause for concern	95%	180.5	9.5	47.5	Orange
	94%	179	11	55	
	93%	177	13	65	
	92%	175	15	75	
	91%	173	17	85	
Unsatisfactory	90%	171	19	95	Red
	89%	169	21	105	
	88%	167	23	115	
	87%	165	25	125	
	86%	163	27	135	
Critical	85%	161.5	28.5	142.5	Red
	84%	159.5	30.5	152.5	
	83%	158	32	160	
	82%	156	34	170	
	81%	154	36	180	
	80%	152	38	190	

Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain?



Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Further to our previous communications, further support is needed to enable PUPIL NAME to attend school regularly, this is because PUPIL NAME continues to have further absences recorded. Please find attached PUPIL NAME's updated attendance record.

School attendance is hugely important and regular attendance ensures your child benefits from all the educational opportunities available to them. This is not just crucial for their learning, but also their wellbeing, and wider development. It is equally important that they attend school on time every day.

We would like to invite you to attend a meeting in school so that we may work together to explore possible support, designed to resolve any attendance concerns. It is important that all relevant parties participate in agreeing any plans, actions or interventions that may be required. As PUPIL NAME's parent/s, it is crucial that your contributions are factored into these plans. We have set aside time to meet with you and PUPIL NAME (where appropriate/applicable) at school to listen, understand and work in partnership to prevent further absence so that PUPIL NAME can fully benefit from the educational opportunities available to them.

Meeting details

Date:

Time:

Location:

Please contact us as soon as possible to confirm you are available on the above date/time, using the contact details below. On the day of the meeting, please report to the school office ten minutes before the meeting start time, so that we can make our way to the meeting room together.

For more information and clarification relating to our school attendance processes and the support available, please refer to our school's attendance policy which is available on the school website via [INSERT LINK](#). If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

If there are any exceptional circumstances preventing you from attending this meeting, it is essential that you contact us as soon as possible, so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Further to our communication dated INSERT DATE, we have noted that although we did not hear from you, PUPIL NAME has not had any further absences. We would like to thank you for your continued support in encouraging PUPIL NAME to engage with the educational opportunities that our school has to offer.

As a school, it is our aim to work jointly and in partnership with the whole school community so that all of our pupils can fully benefit from the educational opportunities available to them. Moving forward, should you need to share any concerns that may impact PUPIL NAME's regular attendance at school, please do not hesitate to contact us, using the contact details below.

For more information and clarification relating to our school attendance processes and the support available, please refer to our school's attendance policy which is available on the school website under the section titled: XXXX. If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: XXXXXXXXXX

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Further to our communication dated INSERT DATE, we have noted that we have not heard from you and PUPIL NAME has had further absence/s recorded, please see

attached/enclosed updated attendance certificate. Due to the further absence/s, we would really appreciate an opportunity to have a discussion with you and look at if any support might be needed. We want to reassure you that as a school, it is our aim to work jointly and in partnership with the whole school community so that all of our pupils can fully benefit from the educational opportunities that **SCHOOL NAME** has to offer.

We would ask that you contact us by **DATE** so that we can have a conversation to understand what support may be needed for **PUPIL NAME** to attend school regularly.

For more information and clarification relating to our school attendance processes and the support available, please refer to our school's attendance policy which is available on the school website under the section titled: **XXXX**. If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname
Position held

Telephone number: **XXXXXXXXXX**
Email: **XXXXXXXXXX**

Title, full forename name and surname
Full address
Full address
Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear **Title, Full Forename and Surname**,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of birth)

School Attendance

Thank you for contacting us regarding our **email/letter** dated **INSERT DATE** to discuss **PUPIL NAME'S** attendance. Please find attached/enclosed a summary of points discussed. Please do not hesitate to contact us using the contact details below to share any further concerns so that we may continue to work together and offer support, as appropriate.

For more information and clarification relating to our school attendance processes and the support available, please refer to our school's attendance policy which is available on the school website under the section titled: **XXXX**. If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname
Position held

Telephone number: **XXXXXXXXXX**

Email: XXXXXXXXXX

Essex Supporting Improved School Attendance

Support First Conversation Pro-Forma

Conversation Aims and Information

- An informal conversation to aid early identification of any concerns so that the right support is put in place early (where required)
- To aid a trusted, strong working partnership between pupils, families, and the school
- Pupil voice and wellbeing is the intended focus
- Documentation of the conversation is important, as is ensuring relevant parties are made aware of any concerns and identified support strategies, to ensure continuity and understanding by all parties

Supporting our children and young people to engage

Date	
Name of person completing form	
Position of person completing form	
Pupil Name	
Pupil Date of birth	
Pupil Year Group	
Form tutor	
Head of year	

How do you feel your child is finding school currently? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
What does your child report they enjoy at school? Are there any lessons or subjects they prefer or is there anything that has peaked their interest? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why.</i>	
Is there a particular member of staff your child has a positive relationship with?	

Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?	
What do you think is important for your child about school?	
Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?	
What is important to you as parents about school, for example, is it their grades, their well-being, their friendships, or all the above?	
Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?	
Do you know if your child has any concerns about school – subjects, friendships, teachers?	
Remember depending on the response to ask why?	
Is there anything you as parents have concerns about in relation to school, for example, subjects, friendships, teachers?	
Remember depending on the response to ask why?	
Is there anything your child is struggling with or worried about at school? And is there anything we as a school might be able to do to help?	
Remember depending on the response to ask why?	
Is there anything that might be worrying you or your child outside of school, is everything ok at home, and is there anything we might be able to do to support you?	
Remember depending on the response to ask why?	

Additional information

Remember depending on the response to ask why?

Copies to be circulated as agreed as part of any internal processes, with any concerns, support and interventions highlighted. Examples of colleagues who may benefit:

- Form Tutor
- Head of Year
- Attendance Officer
- SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinators)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy
- Pastoral Support Team
- If a Looked after child, or previously looked after – Designated Teacher
- Senior Attendance Champion

Title, full forename name and surname

Full address

Full address

Postcode (ensure is accurate)

Date

Dear Title, Full Forename and Surname,

RE: Pupil Name (Date of Birth)

School Attendance

We have noticed that your child has had some absences recorded recently, and we would like to better understand the reasons behind those absences, and whether you or your child require any support from the school to prevent further absence. Please find attached/enclosed a copy of your child's current attendance record.

School attendance is hugely important and regular attendance ensures your child benefits from all the educational opportunities available to them. This is not just crucial for their learning, but also their wellbeing, and wider development. It is equally important that they attend school on time every day.

We would like to offer you an opportunity to talk through any barriers preventing regular attendance, and how we may work together to support **Pupil Name** to benefit from all of the educational opportunities that **SCHOOL NAME** has to offer. Please contact us to arrange a mutually convenient time for us to have a discussion, either via the telephone or face to face. In the meantime, please feel free to look at our school's attendance policy, available on the school website under the section titled: **XXXX**. If you would like a hard copy, these are available via the school office.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Forename and Surname

Position held

Telephone number: **XXXXXXXXXX**

Email: **XXXXXXXXXX**

Essex Pupil Return to School Check In

(To be completed on first day of return especially important where absence was not reported)

(Add this into your school's attendance policy under a tiered system – stage one)

Supporting our children and young people to engage

Date	
Name of person completing form	
Position of person completing form	
Pupil Name	
Pupil Date of birth	
Pupil Year Group	
Form tutor	
Head of year	

How are you? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
What about today are you looking forward to / what about today has gone well? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
What do you like most about school, and what is the best thing about coming to school?	

Do you have any concerns about school – subjects, friendships, teachers? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
Is everything ok at home? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	
Is there anything you are struggling with or worried about at school? And is there anything the school can do to help you? <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>	

Additional information

<i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i>

Attach current attendance certificate as at date of completion to form – ensure it shows the pupil's name

Copies to be circulated as agreed as part of any internal processes. Examples of colleagues who may benefit:

- Form Tutor
- Head of Year
- Attendance Officer
- SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinators)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy
- Pastoral Support Team
- If a Looked after child, or previously looked after – Designated Teacher
- Senior Attendance Champion