# South East Essex Academy Trust

# SEEAT School Attendance Policy

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| **Title** | School Attendance Policy 2026 |
| **Author** | Caroline Thornton |
| **Owner** | SEEAT |
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| **Review Cycle** | Annual |

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| **Review Date** | September 2027 |

## Hadleigh Junior School - Attendance Information

**Please find below information relating specifically to Hadleigh Junior School**

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| **School Start Time** | 8.45am (doors open at 8.35am) |
| **Morning Registration Closing Time** | 9am |
| **Afternoon Registration Closing Time** | 1.20pm |
| **First Day Calling** | Parents/carers must notify the school that their child is absent by 9.20am on each day of absence.<br>Telephone or text the parent/carer on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from the parent/carer, however it is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact us. For all unauthorised absences, a telephone call will be made, if the parents have not already contacted the school, to advise that the absence is unauthorised and to encourage the attendance.<br><br>If we are unable to make contact with the parent/carer by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit will be made in the interests of safeguarding.<br><br>A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate) at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education." |
| **Reporting Absence Procedures** | Absence can be reported by calling 01702 558619 or via the Parentmail app |
| **Requesting Leave of Absence Procedures** | Please contact the School office on 01702 558619 |
| **Procedure for moving school** | Please contact the School office on 01702 558619 |
| **Who to contact if you have a concern about your child, or young person's attendance.** | Please contact the School office on 01702 558619 |
| **Our school observes the Essex County Council procedures for** | Please refer to Annex B |

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| **managing school attendance.** | **Essex County Council Code of Conduct and School Attendance Guidance**<br>SEEAT schools located within Essex County Council follow the procedures and processes detailed in the Essex School Attendance Guidance and Code of Conduct 2024<br>The Education Access Team can be contacted via School attendance and absence: Our teams and who to contact **or by phoning: 03330 322534** |
| **Attendance support commissioned from Aquinas** | **Aquinas**<br>Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties are not resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to Aquinas. Aquinas works alongside the school's internal attendance team to help the school promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, and to act early to address patterns of absence. They conduct weekly attendance reviews for all pupils, identify individual concerns and recommend the appropriate action. The process of intervention implemented by Aquinas is solely designed to overcome any identified barrier to a student's school attendance without the need for legal action. The process is primarily aimed to work with pupils and parents to firstly inform them of the concern, then engage with them to identify and resolve any barriers affecting attendance. It is only where all support-centred measures have failed to make an impact and the unauthorised absences continue, that legal action in the form of penalty notice will be considered. Aquinas is a member of the National Association of Social Workers in Education (NASWE) and is accredited by Essex Police under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) with the power to issue penalty notices. |

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## 1. Policy Aims and Introduction

### South East Essex Academy Trust (SEEAT) Statement on Attendance

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

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance 2026 Our attendance policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

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

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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

The Trust recognises the close relationship between attendance, safeguarding and pupil welfare. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*, all staff understand that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, may be at increased risk of harm, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other safeguarding concerns. Attendance information therefore forms an important part of the school's safeguarding systems, procedures and decision making.

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

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

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

## 2. Statutory Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance 2026 from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and all subsequent amendments
- Schools Census Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Mental Health Issues Affecting School Attendance

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Strategies for improving school attendance begins at board level, therefore all academy trust boards, and local governing bodies should take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures.

### 3.1 The Board of Trustees and the Local Governing Body (LGB)

The board and members of the local governing body is expected to:

- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Make sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school, works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Ensure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Ensure all staff receive regular attendance training and annual attendance and safeguarding updates as part of the school's continuing professional development programme. Staff must understand the importance of good attendance, recognise that absence is often a symptom of wider issues, understand statutory attendance codes and legal register requirements, are familiar with the school's attendance procedures and safeguarding responsibilities, can identify attendance concerns at an early stage, and understand the school's processes for monitoring, following up and improving attendance, including working effectively with parents, external partners and other agencies where appropriate
- Make sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Trust will share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across our schools.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Co-ordinating with the Mental Health Lead and SENDCo to identify and plan support for pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
- Co-ordinating with the SENDCo, to:
    - Work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers, and
    - Communicate with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Requesting fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance lead to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The school will appoint a named Senior Attendance Champion with strategic responsibility for attendance.
The attendance champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing, and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for attendance improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

### 3.4 The attendance lead or officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with partner agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher, or other person authorised by the headteacher, when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Follow the school's procedures for first day calling. Be prepared to be assertive. Avoid any sense of collusion with parents over unnecessary absence
- Issue attendance letters where required. Make sure they have the intended effect. Do not tolerate a lack of response. Seek advice when you need it
- Hold regular discussions with the headteacher and the SEEAT Head of Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour
- Advise the headteacher of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly. Registers are legal documents and must be kept carefully and accurately
- Inform the headteacher about families where unhelpful habits are forming
- Make sure action is taken to break unhelpful habits at the earliest opportunity
- Check and file all absence notifications that are received and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.

### 3.5 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and tutors are responsible for:

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

### 3.6 School administration and office staff

School administration and office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers and pupils (post-16/sixth form) about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls and pass on messages from parents/carers, pupils (post-16/sixth form) to attendance leads, heads of year and other staff, where appropriate, to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Pass on information to the school attendance officer if you have concerns, or new information about a pupil's absence
- Assist the attendance leader to identify barriers to attendance and punctuality

### 3.7 Parents and carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day, and that they attend on time
- Call the school to inform to report their child's absence on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence before the time indicated on the school information page at the front of this policy, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority (where applicable)
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the key support staff, as indicated on school information page at the front of this policy.

### 3.8 Attendance expectations for all pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Post-16/sixth form students, or their parent will call the school to report their absence before time indicated on the school information page at the front of this policy on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.

**Attendance Expectations for Nursery and Other Non-Compulsory School Age Pupils**

## 4. Recording attendance

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

The Trust complies with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
Registers are carefully monitored, and pupils who have not registered are identified, and the matter is investigated.

Our attendance officers will follow first day calling procedures as a matter of routine, to identify pupil whereabouts, and the reasons for non-attendance.
First day calling is carried out in-line with the individual school's process. Safeguarding pupils is our priority, and every effort will be made to locate pupils who are absent without notice, by contacting all known contacts by phone, text, email and any other school communication system to establish the pupil's whereabouts.

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

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Secondary schools will also take registers to mark pupil attendance at the start of lessons. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved, off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not for pupils of compulsory school age
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved, educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

### 4.2 Absence procedures

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

- Contact the child's school on the first day of absence providing specific information including their name, class or tutor group, and a detailed reason for absence. Generic comments such as ill, unwell, under the weather, poorly or off-colour and may result in the school seeking further information before determining whether the absence can be authorised
- Contact the school on every further day of absence unless you have provided evidence of your child's absence which is date specific, for example a hospital discharge letter or written advice from a medical professional
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible

**If your child is absent the school will:**

- Telephone, text or email (in-line with the school's individual procedures) the parent or guardian on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If you fail to respond the school will contact all other emergency contacts provided by you, until we are satisfied your child is safe, and absent for good reason

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Information about individual school start times and the close of registration can be found on the school information page at the front of this policy.

**Attendance and Absence in Nursery and Early Years**

Although attendance at nursery is not compulsory, SEEAT schools strongly encourage regular attendance to support children's learning, development, wellbeing and successful transition into statutory education. Whilst attendance legislation applies only to children of compulsory school age, safeguarding responsibilities apply to all children on roll. Parents and carers of nursery-aged children must inform the school of any absence and maintain appropriate communication during periods of non-attendance. Where attendance concerns arise, including unexplained absence, repeated absence or a lack of parental contact, the school may undertake safeguarding enquiries, welfare checks or home visits as appropriate to ensure the child is safe and receiving appropriate support.

## Attendance and Absence in Post-16 Education

Whilst the legal duty on parents to secure regular attendance ends when a young person reaches compulsory school age, regular attendance remains an essential requirement for successful participation, progress and achievement in post-16 education. Good attendance is associated with higher levels of attainment, successful course completion, positive wellbeing and improved future employment, training and higher education outcomes.

Students enrolled in the school's sixth form or post-16 provision are expected to attend all timetabled lessons, tutorials, examinations, enrichment activities and other educational commitments, unless absence has been authorised by the school. Students and, where appropriate, their parents or carers, are expected to notify the school of absence promptly and maintain communication throughout any period of non-attendance.

The school retains a duty of care and safeguarding responsibility for all students on roll, including those attending post-16 provision. Unexplained absence, repeated absence, disengagement from education, or a failure to maintain contact may indicate that a student requires additional support or may be at risk. Where concerns arise, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the student's welfare and identify any barriers to attendance. This may include contact with parents or carers (where appropriate), emergency contacts, welfare meetings, support planning, home visits or liaison with external agencies where necessary.

The school will work collaboratively with students, families and partner agencies to identify and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that students receive the support required to remain engaged in education, achieve their potential and remain safe.

**Note:**
***Failure to contact the school or respond to our calls and other forms of communication regarding absence may trigger a home visit from school staff, or a local authority representative, the Police or social care. We have a duty of care to our pupils which includes knowing they are safe if they do not arrive at school.***
***We never assume that a child is at home unwell, until we have been provided with a reason for the absence, or absence has been requested in advance.***

### 4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by the time indicated on school information page at the front of this policy.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

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

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

### 4.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and evidence can be provided of the appointment.
However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Note: Please see the school information page at the start of this policy for school specific information.

### 4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, or the start of lessons they miss valuable learning time and work, as well as other essential information about the school day and opportunities to feel connected to the school community.
Pupils who arrive late disrupt the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing for them, in turn promoting absence.
Good timekeeping is an essential life skill which will help pupils as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using an 'L' code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the 'U' code

### 4.6 How we manage lateness

Pupils should be in school for morning and afternoon registration. Secondary students are also registered at the start of each lesson. Pupils arriving late will be expected to provide a legitimate reason for their lateness.
In the case of our primary pupils, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardian to provide a reason.

All reasons for lateness are recorded.
After the registers close lateness will be marked as an unauthorised absence. This means you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer and any other professionals deemed appropriate by the school.

Parents can approach our schools, at any time if there are problems with getting to school on time. Our schools are committed to providing support and intervention to overcome the barriers to lateness. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils.

### 4.7 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/ legal guardian on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may refer concerns to the police or the local authority (Children's Service's). Post-16/ sixth form pupils will also be contacted directly.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving a school attendance officer, from the local authority or their commissioned provider
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to external agencies, such as social care and youth offending team, working with the child and family
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention may be issued in line with the local authority Code of Conduct.

### 4.8 Reporting to parents

Schools will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Communications may be received in reports, at parent consultations and through direct contact if there are concerns. Some schools use attendance applications which means you can monitor your child's attendance directly.

## 5. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school needs to be classified by the school as either ***authorised*** or ***unauthorised***. ***It is only the school who can authorise an absence and not parents/guardians.***
It is for this reason that information about the cause of any absence is always required. This enables the school to make an informed decision about whether a pupil's absence from school should be authorised. Each half-day is known as a session.
Absence from school is recorded in line with reasons for absence and whether, or not the absence is authorised. Further information about absence coding can be found in annex A at the end of this policy.

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

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

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

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

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

The fundamental principles for defining **'exceptional'** are events that are **''rare, significant, unavoidable and short''**. By **'unavoidable'** we mean an event that could not be scheduled at another time.
Unauthorised absence also includes any days off without a satisfactory reason or explanation. Where unauthorised absence is persistent and exceeds the number of unauthorised absences defined in the local authority Code of Conduct, a Penalty Notice can be issued. **Please see Annex A for the ECC (Essex County Council) and Annex B for the SCC Codes of Conduct.**

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form prescribed by the school.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a pupil is over compulsory school age (post-16/ sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers), and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## 5.2 Penalty Notices

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

**Penalty notices**

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We believe that excellent attendance is best achieved by making our academies safe, happy and exciting places of learning and belonging. Our schools are committed to improving school attendance by working in collaboration with parents, pupils, and local partners. Where attendance concerns are identified we endeavour to resolve them. SEEAT schools:

- Create positive, engaging and welcoming school environments
- Nurture a culture of opportunity with rich experience for personal development as well as an exciting and stimulating curriculum
- Build good relationships with pupils and their families
- Communicate attendance messages effectively
- Identify pupils and families who require support at an early stage
- Identify contextual risks which may negatively impact on good school attendance, for example bullying
- Connect with at-risk pupils and families and start conversations early
- Work in partnership with stakeholders, parents and pupils
- Reward good and improving behaviour whilst considering the fairness of the systems in place
- Make school attendance a whole school priority
- Positively reintegrate pupils following absence.

Schools monitor the impact and effectiveness of the strategies employed and seek creative solutions to attendance problems.

### 6.1 Support First and Early Help Approach

SEEAT schools are committed to a support first approach to attendance. We recognise that poor attendance is often a symptom of wider difficulties and that absence can be an indicator that a child, young person or family requires additional support. Our priority is therefore to understand the reasons behind absence, identify barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity and work collaboratively with pupils, parents, carers and partner agencies to secure sustained improvements in attendance. This approach is consistent with the Department for Education's expectations and the attendance procedures adopted by Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The school will seek to build positive relationships with pupils and families, creating an environment where concerns can be shared openly and support can be accessed promptly. Attendance concerns will be considered within the context of the child's individual circumstances, taking account of safeguarding, welfare, health, SEND, mental health, family circumstances and any other factors that may affect attendance

Where attendance concerns emerge, the school will act promptly and proportionately. Intervention will normally begin with early identification, discussion and support rather than enforcement. The school will seek to understand the barriers to attendance through regular communication with pupils and families and will work with them to develop achievable solutions which support regular school attendance.

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Regular attendance monitoring and review
- Conversations and meetings with pupils and parents or carers
- Attendance mentoring and pastoral support
- Support from a trusted adult within school
- Individual attendance plans or attendance contracts
- Reintegration and transition support
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, medical needs or EBSA
- Referrals to the school nursing service, mental health support, Early Help or other specialist services
- Multi-agency planning and coordinated support
- Welfare checks and home visits where appropriate
- Support from local authority attendance teams or commissioned attendance services.

The school will maintain clear records of attendance concerns, interventions and outcomes. Attendance information will be reviewed regularly by attendance leaders, safeguarding staff and senior leaders to ensure that concerns are identified quickly and that support is both timely and effective. Patterns of absence, persistent absence, severe absence, repeated lateness and any emerging safeguarding concerns will be carefully monitored.

In line with Essex and Southend attendance procedures, legal intervention will be considered only where appropriate support has been offered, barriers have been explored, reasonable opportunities to engage have been provided and attendance remains a concern. However, where a child is at risk of harm, parents fail to engage, or circumstances indicate that immediate action is necessary, the school may escalate concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures or local authority attendance protocols without delay.

The Trust believes that the most effective way to improve attendance is through strong relationships, early intervention, shared responsibility and a culture of support, whilst maintaining high expectations for attendance and ensuring that every child receives their entitlement to a full-time education.

## 7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

SEEAT schools have an individualised approach to supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school. The individual response will consider the age of the pupil and the reason for and length of absence.

The Trust recognises that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school.

Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

It is especially important to hear from the pupil themselves to find out what they are worried about, what they find difficult and what would support them to attend or return to school.

Please see the table in Annex D- Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays.

### 7.1 Pupils attending Alternative Provision and Off-Site Education

SEEAT schools recognise that some pupils may attend Alternative Provision (AP), commissioned provision, vocational placements, hospital education, or other forms of off-site educational provision as part of their educational programme.

Where a pupil is placed in alternative or off-site provision, the school retains overall responsibility for the pupil's education, attendance, safeguarding and welfare. The school will maintain effective oversight of the placement and will work closely with the provider, parents/carers, local authority and other relevant professionals.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance at the provision regularly.
- Ensure attendance information is shared promptly between the provider and the school.
- Investigate and follow up any absence in line with the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain regular communication with the pupil, family and provider.
- Monitor educational progress, participation and engagement.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are shared and acted upon appropriately.
- Review the suitability and effectiveness of the placement on a regular basis.

Pupils attending alternative provision are expected to attend regularly and punctually in accordance with the expectations of both the provider and the school. Any attendance concerns will be addressed through a support-first approach, whilst ensuring that the school fulfils its safeguarding and statutory responsibilities.

### 7.2 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and pupils experiencing emotional based school avoidance (EBSA).

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided.
The school will Identify who will be the key touchpoint for the pupil, and for their family. This may be the same person, or different people.

Their role is to:
- Act as a conduit for communication between the school and the pupil and/or the family
- Meet with the pupil and/or their family as often as often as is needed, depending on the family circumstances
- Build a relationship with the pupil and/or the family
- Regularly report back to the person leading on attendance
- Record any insights they glean on the pupil's barriers to attendance
- Reward and acknowledge progress and improvement.

Before discussing this with the pupil:
- Agree with relevant staff members on the best approach to take
- Ask the pupil's trusted adult (see above) to approach the pupil, when they judge the time is right.

When discussing this with the pupil, the trusted adult should:
- Be tactful and gentle, especially if the pupil has emotionally based school avoidance
- Take their time. It may be overwhelming for some pupils, and it is better to wait for a suitable time for the conversation
- Frame the issue positively, and from a place of care and concern
- Not dismiss the pupil's worries or tell them off for being absent (as this could increase their anxiety around school and make their attendance issues worse).

Our schools implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Support from a trusted adult at school who knows the pupil best
- A reintegration plan and support

- Support from a counsellor, school nurse or the mental health lead
- Referrals to support agencies
- Support from learning mentor support or from the inclusion team
- Friendship groups and buddy systems
- Rewards
- Time limited adjusted timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents and pupils.

### 7.3 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health, EBSA or SEND

The role of school staff is to ensure that the school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, which is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Schools achieve this by promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach to pupil mental health, and by developing a trusted relationship with parents/carers and families.

Schools also play a key role in teaching pupils about respectful relationships, emotional wellbeing, mental health and supporting social and emotional development through a high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate RHSE curriculum.

SEEAT schools will involve parents in conversations about mental health, EBSA and SEND at an early stage.

**Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**
Emotionally based school avoidance or EBSA is also commonly referred to as school anxiety, school refusal and emotionally based school non-attendance/avoidance. All of these are terms are used to describe children and young people who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings, such as extreme anxiety and stress. EBSA may result in a child or young person avoiding or not attending school.

We recognise that pupils require an individualised approach, sometimes requiring reasonable adjustments to support school attendance. It is always the aim of a plan to maximise face-to face attendance as much as possible.

Adjustments may include:

- Having lunch and snack in a different location
- Timetable adjustment (short term and with frequent review)
- A soft landing at the start of the day – adjusting to being at school, outside of the classroom
- Being greeted by a trusted adult/ peer
- Creating personal spaces
- Introducing brain breaks and time for regulation
- Transition support for key times the day/ week/ term/ year
- Uniform adjustments
- The provision of specific equipment
- Moving around the school when corridors are quieter.

This is not an extensive, or exhaustive list, but gives examples of the types of interventions and adjustments that may be suggested. Experienced and skilled school staff will collaborate with pupils and their families to plan for and overcome attendance difficulties.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### 7.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence which may include SEND, EBSA, physical ill health, mental ill health, or other extenuating circumstances

Returning to school after a lengthy absence can be a worrying and overwhelming time. Pupils may worry about fitting back in, managing tiredness or ill health, looking different after an illness/ treatment or surgery, falling behind their peers, catching up on missed learning, reintegrating with friends and school routines and any other worries unique to their circumstances.

Where possible, schools will support pupils not attending school to minimise the impact of prolonged absence. This may include:

- Emails and messages
- Video calls and use of AV Bots
- Written communication and photos
- Home/ hospital visits

A return to school will be carefully considered and managed in partnership with the pupil and their family.

The school will be sensitive to the child's needs when they are considering what information to share with their peers and the wider school community.

As detailed above, the school will individualise their approach to meet the need of the returning pupil. The strategies implemented may include those already listed, with the addition of:

- Plans to manage health conditions and the associated appointments
- Support to catch up on miss learning

In the event of ill health, a key part of their return may be the creation of an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP). This is a formal document which sets out things like:

- What their condition is
- What medication they take
- Who, in the school community, can administer their medication
- What to do in an emergency
- Arrangements that need to be made to enable your child to attend school, such as a quiet rest area

Pupils and parents are central to creating an IHCP. The process may also include other people involved in your child's care, such as their GP, paediatrician, or specialist nurse.

## 8. SEEAT attendance monitoring

SEEAT schools have robust and consistent measures in place to monitor school attendance, this includes daily monitoring to quickly identify pupils who have not arrived at school, as well as weekly, termly and annual reviews.

Schools will monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty

Schools track pupil attendance to:

- Identify groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support
- Monitor the attendance of specific groups such as PA, whole school, PP, SEN, EAL

Attendance is reviewed annually as part of the trust improvement strategy and during termly visits and data captures by the Trust Head of SAB.

Absence concerns, and patterns of non-attendance which indicate risk or concern are recorded on the school electronic safeguarding system, so DSL's maintain oversight.

### 8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school and Trust will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board. Monitoring includes statistical information about pupils with extended absence due to medical conditions, EBSA and mental ill health and other extenuating, or complex circumstances.

### 8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups, or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis, to include:

- Targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Summary attendance reports will be shared with key stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring and support. Reports will be provided to:
    - Nursery and class teachers
    - Form tutors
    - Heads of year
    - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)
    - Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)
    - Pupil Premium Leads
    - Other relevant staff as required
    - Senior school leaders
    - The Governing Board

Summary reports will be used to:

- Facilitate timely discussions with pupils and families regarding attendance concerns
- Inform targeted interventions and pastoral support
- Enable strategic oversight of attendance trends and patterns
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are met
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

Schools will work collaboratively with other schools in the Trust and the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

### 8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - Explain the help that is available
    - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

## 9. Removing pupils from attendance registers

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off rolling.

Schools will refer to the regulation 9 which defines the reasons for deleting a pupil from the register. School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register (a Deletion Return).

This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year. For any pupil leaving one of our Trust schools, other than at the end of:

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

Parents and guardians are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office.

Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, as set out in regulation 13(4), the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.

### 9.1 Removal from school roll following a permanent exclusion

A pupil's name cannot be deleted from the admission register until the outcome of any consideration of reinstatement and independent review in the case of a disciplinary exclusion from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, or academy.

The governing board must ensure that a pupil's name is removed from the school admission register if:

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

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

While the pupil's name remains on the school's admission register, the pupil's attendance will still be recorded appropriately.

A school cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement 2026

### 10. Children missing education

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing from education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life. A child missing from education is defined as a child of compulsory school age that is not on roll at a school, or a child that has unauthorised absence from school for a lengthy period and cannot be contacted.

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

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

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

Following the school making reasonable enquiries they will complete a CME referral to Essex County Council's Attendance Compliance Team Children missing education (CME) | Essex Schools Infolink or Southend City Council

Attendance Team Southend Children Missing Education Notification Form. They should provide as much information as possible. The relevant local authority will make extensive enquiries to ensure that children are located.

Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2025

## 11. Safeguarding – Children who are absent from education

As a Trust we prioritise safeguarding our children and young people and recognise that school attendance is a key safeguarding responsibility. We have a duty to promote the welfare of children, understand and investigate the reasons for unexplained absence, persistent absence and patterns of lateness, and take appropriate action where concerns arise. This section should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026*. Staff should be aware that absence from school, particularly where it is prolonged, repeated, unexplained or accompanied by reduced parental engagement, may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental ill health or other safeguarding concerns and should be considered within the school's wider safeguarding framework.

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeated occasions can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, bullying, poor mental health and other vulnerabilities. Children who are missing education are at increased risk of harm, including criminal exploitation, grooming and becoming disconnected from protective services and support networks.

Regular absence, particularly unexplained absence, may be a significant indicator that a child requires additional help or protection. Equally, school provides an important opportunity for children to access trusted adults, pastoral support and safeguarding intervention. Knowing who is absent, understanding why they are absent and maintaining contact with children and families are therefore fundamental elements of effective safeguarding practice.

Staff who monitor attendance are in a key position to identify emerging concerns. However, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all staff should remain alert to persistent absence, severe absence, patterns of irregular attendance, unexplained absence and sudden changes in attendance, engagement or parental contact, which may indicate that additional support or intervention is required.

Patterns of absence, levels of parental engagement, pre-existing welfare concerns and pupils identified as vulnerable or at risk will be closely monitored and analysed to ensure a timely and proportionate response. Attendance information will be considered alongside safeguarding, behaviour, wellbeing and pastoral information to support effective decision-making and risk assessment.

In line with the Trust's safeguarding procedures, a range of supportive interventions may be considered where concerns arise. These may include welfare checks, home visits by school staff or commissioned attendance services, multi-agency working, referrals to Early Help, Children Missing Education (CME) notifications, referrals to Children's Social Care or Essex Police, and other appropriate safeguarding actions. Such interventions are intended to ensure that children are safe, support regular attendance and help families access the assistance they may require.

## 12. Home visit procedures for school absence

Home visits are direct, in-person visits undertaken by appropriately trained school staff or by attendance professionals commissioned to support the school. A home visit may be considered where a pupil is absent from school and the school is unable to establish the reason for the absence, has been unable to make appropriate contact with parents or carers, has concerns regarding the pupil's welfare, attendance or safety, or where there are known vulnerabilities that require further assessment.

The school has a safeguarding responsibility towards all pupils on roll, including those who are not of compulsory school age. Regular communication during periods of absence is therefore essential to enable the school to satisfy itself that a child is safe, understand any barriers to attendance, identify support needs and fulfil its safeguarding

duties. Parents and carers are expected to maintain contact with the school during any period of absence and to respond promptly to requests for information regarding their child's welfare and expected return to school.

Home visits form part of the school's attendance and safeguarding procedures and may be used as a supportive intervention to:

- Establish the whereabouts and welfare of a pupil.
- Verify that a child is safe where contact has not been achieved through normal channels.
- Understand and address barriers affecting attendance.
- Offer support and guidance to pupils and families.
- Promote a successful return to school.
- Fulfil the school's safeguarding responsibilities towards children who are absent from education.

The Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance recognises that schools may utilise attendance and pastoral staff to work with families, conduct home visits and work collaboratively with local authority attendance services and other partners as part of their attendance improvement strategy. Effective schools are also expected to have robust processes for following up unexplained absence and ensuring appropriate safeguarding action is taken where concerns remain.

Any decision to undertake a home visit will be proportionate, professionally justified, risk assessed and based on the individual circumstances of the child and family. Visits are not undertaken as a punitive measure but as a supportive and safeguarding response intended to promote pupil welfare, engagement and attendance. Visits will normally be unannounced where there are immediate welfare or safeguarding concerns, or where contact has not been established. However, where a pupil is absent over an extended period and there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, the school will carefully consider the appropriateness, frequency and purpose of visits and, where suitable, coordinate these with the parent or carer.

Any information obtained, concerns identified or actions agreed during a visit will be recorded on the school's attendance and/or safeguarding systems and acted upon as appropriate. Where concerns regarding a child's welfare remain, the school may seek support from the local authority or make referrals to relevant external agencies in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

**Professional Conduct**

All visits will be conducted respectfully and professionally. Staff must observe the SEEAT Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

**Pre-visit considerations**

Before authorising a visit, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider:

- Whether the visit is necessary, justified and proportionate to the concern
- Whether they are satisfied that all relevant checks have been completed
- Whether there is a clear safeguarding or attendance rationale
- The length of the absence and any complexities or concerns which indicate a visit is required

**The purpose of home visits:**

- To follow up on unexplained absence

- To check on the whereabouts and welfare of the pupil and the family, especially if contact attempts have failed
- To understand the barriers to attendance and establish the reason for absence
- To offer support and encourage a return to school
- To fulfil safeguarding responsibilities under Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025)

**Before the visit:**

- The visit must be authorised by the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), their deputy (DDSL), following careful consideration
- Review the pupil's attendance record and any known safeguarding concerns
- Staff must carry their school ID and a mobile phone
- A risk assessment must be completed to ensure staff safety

**During the visit:**

- Staff may enter the home only if invited and if they feel safe
- Establish the reason for absence, agree on any support needed, and where possible confirm the intended return date
- Leave a calling card or note asking the family to contact the school urgently

**After the visit:**

- Record the visit on the school's attendance/ and or safeguarding systems.
- Report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures or concerns to the DSL immediately
- Follow up on any actions, referrals or return visits agreed with the with the family
- If the visit is unsuccessful and the child's whereabouts remain unknown, the DSL and the Headteacher will agree on the next steps. This may include seeking support from the local authority and consider referring to external agencies if concerns persist.

As outlined in **Section 10**, of this guidance a **Child Missing Education referral (CME)** will be made to the relevant local authority.

## Annex A

## Attendance Codes

**The following attendance codes are prescribed by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and explained within the Department for Education's Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance.** guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **Attending a place other than the school** | | |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority | Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school |
| P | Participating in a sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| W | Attending work experience | Pupil is on an approved work experience placement |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity | Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **Absent – leave of absence** | | |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **J1** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **S** | Study leave | Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination |
| **X** | Pupil of non-compulsory school age | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **C2** | Pupil is absent from school in accordance with a temporary, time-limited part-time timetable. | The timetable is formally agreed by the school and parent/carer and is subject to regular review. |
| **C** | Exceptional circumstances | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **Absent – other authorised reasons** | | |
| **T** | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **I** | Illness (not medical or dental appointment) | Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health) |
| **E** | Suspended or permanently excluded | Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made |
| **Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause** | | |
| **Q** | Lack of access arrangements | Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school |
| **Y1** | Transport not available | Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available |
| **Y2** | Widespread disruption to travel | Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency |
| **Y3** | Part of school premises closed | Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Y4** | Whole school site unexpectedly closed | Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather) |
| **Y5** | Criminal justice detention | Pupil is unable to attend as they are:<br>• In police detention<br>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or<br>• Detained under a sentence of detention |
| **Y6** | Public health guidance or law | Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law |
| **Y7** | Any other unavoidable cause | To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes |
| **Absent – unauthorised absence** | | |
| **G** | Holiday not granted by the school | Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason for absence not yet established | N code should only be used until the code can be amended when the reason for absence has been established (no later than 5 days after absence) |
| **O** | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence |
| **U** | Arrived in school after registration closed | Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session |
| **Administrative codes** | | |
| **Z** | Prospective pupil not on admission register | Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered |
| **#** | Planned whole-school closure | Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays |

**Annex B**
**Essex County Council School Attendance Guidance and Code of Conduct**

Essex County Council - Education Department Code of conduct - Penalty notices for school absence/suspended pupils Applies from 1 September 2024

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that penalty notices for school absence are issued in a manner that is fair and consistent across Essex County Council's authority.

The code sets out the arrangements for administering penalty notices in Essex and must be adhered to by anyone issuing a penalty notice for school absence in this area. The code complies with relevant regulations and the Department for Education's national framework for penalty notices as set out in the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Provisions set out within this Code of Conduct will apply to unauthorised absences recorded by schools within Essex County Council's authority from the start of the 2024/25 academic year.

N.B. Absences recorded prior to 19 August 2024 may be subject to the provisions set out within the previous, locally agreed, Code of Conduct.

For further, detailed information about the Essex County Council Code of Conduct please go to:

Essex County Council - Penalty notices for school absence/suspended pupils from 1 September 2024

Further guidance about attendance provision at Essex County Council is available via the links on the school information page.

**Annex C**

**DfE guidance Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance**

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance 2024

## 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.<br><br>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).<br><br>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.<br><br>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.<br><br>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.<br><br>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.<br><br>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.<br><br>Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.<br><br>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.<br><br>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.<br><br>Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.<br><br>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.<br><br>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.<br><br>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.<br><br>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.<br><br>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:<br><br>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.<br><br>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.<br><br>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.<br><br>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care.<br><br>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:<br><br>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders.<br><br>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.<br><br>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.<br><br>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:<br><br>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:<br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Proactively engage with the support offered. | Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.<br><br>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.<br><br>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.<br><br>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.<br><br>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. |

## 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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:<br><br>• Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school - wherever they live or are educated.<br>• 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.<br>• 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.<br>• 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.<br><br>(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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>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.<br><br>Ofsted considers governing bodies' efforts as part of inspections. | DfE Regions Group monitors local authority efforts as part of regular interaction.<br><br>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.<br><br>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 D**

# 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.

### National Threshold

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

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

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

### First Offence

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

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

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

### Second Offence

**(within 3 years)**

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

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

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

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

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

**Annex E**
**Links with other policies**

The SEEAT Pupil Attendance Policy links to the policies listed below. Please follow the link for further information.

| Policies | Link |
|---|---|
| Behaviour Policy (Local) | Hadleigh Junior School - Policies |
| SEEAT Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy 2026 | |
| SEEAT Statement of Intent and Guiding Principles to Behaviour | |
| SEEAT Safeguarding and Child Protection 2026 | |
| SEEAT Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy 2026 | |
| SEEAT Allergy Safety Policy 2026 | |