





# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

West Hatch High School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment. Regular attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

## ***Introduction:***

Research has shown that regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. Therefore, there is a direct link between regular attendance and high achievement.

When children are not in school, they are deprived of the educational opportunities, and they are at much greater risk of becoming socially excluded and disadvantaged.

## **Why Attendance Matters**

We recognise that there are times when absence from school is unavoidable. However, we also know that regular attendance has a powerful impact on a young person's academic progress and future opportunities.

Recent national research highlights the strong link between attendance and exam success. For example, students with 95–100% attendance in Year 11 are nearly twice as likely to achieve a Grade 5 or above in English and Maths compared to those with 90–95%. Missing just 10 days in Year 11 can reduce the chance of securing a Grade 5 by 50%. We share this not to cause concern, but to empower. Every day in school counts and your support in promoting regular attendance plays a vital role in helping your child succeed. Together, we can give all our students the best chance to thrive – now and in the future.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

## **West Hatch Attendance Policy**

Our Attendance 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, in line with Government and Local Authority requirements, and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers so that they are aware of their own child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

### **Understanding different types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required and is a legal requirement.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, as well as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school and the governors, following Government regulations, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and fines.

#### Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to be registered (30 minutes after the register opens);
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- day trips;
- holidays in term time, including any arranged by other family members or friends.

Please see the Attendance Policy for full details of which circumstances will **not** be authorised.

A checklist for parents:

#### **Your child can only receive an authorized absence if:**

- (1) **they are too ill to go to school** ✓
- (2) **it is a special day for religious observance** ✓
- (3) **if they need to receive URGENT medical or dental treatment.** ✓ *Please try to arrange check-up appointments for after school or during the school holidays*

## Holidays in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

The law specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that "the need or desire for a holiday" is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

The Department for Education has introduced a new statutory national Framework, that all schools in England must follow.

- There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued for an offence of unauthorised absence, the first will attract a fine of up to £160 per pupil, per parent (£80 if paid within 21 days);
- A second offence in three years will attract a fine of £160 per pupil, per parent.
- Schools cannot issue a third penalty notice in 3 years, and must consider other sanctions, which may include prosecution.

Please speak to the school if you need more information about the new rules.

## Structure of the School Day

### Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

8.35am		<b>School Begins</b>
8.40am	9.10am	Period 1 - Tutor Time
9.10am	10.10am	Period 2
10.10am	11.10am	Period 3
11.10am	11.30am	<b>BREAK</b>
11.30am	12.30pm	Period 4
12.30pm	1.30pm	Period 5
1.30pm	2.15pm	<b>LUNCH</b>
2.15pm	3.15pm	Period 6
3.15pm	End of the school day for Years 7, 8 & 9	
3.20pm	End of the school day for Years 10,11,12 &13	

### Tuesday

8.35am		<b>School Begins</b>
8.40am	9.40am	Period 2
9.40am	10.40am	Period 3
10.40am	11.00am	<b>BREAK</b>
11.00am	12.00pm	Period 4
12.00pm	1.00pm	Period 5
1.00pm	1.45pm	<b>LUNCH</b>
1.45pm	2.40pm	Period 6
2.40pm	End of the school day for Years 7, 8 & 9	
2.45pm	End of the school day Years 10,11,12 &13	

### **What to do in the case of an absence**

For everyday of unplanned absence, parents should telephone the school. *This is to ensure all communications are reported to the designated Attendance Officer in a timely manner to allow safeguarding processes to happen as early as possible. Please make note of the process below:*

*To report a student absence you must call the school by 09:00am on 02085048216 and select option 1.*

*You will then be directed to the student absence line where you will need to clearly state the following:*

**STUDENT NAME, FORM GROUP, REASON FOR ABSENCE, YOUR RELATION TO STUDENT**

### **What happens if I am absent from school?**

At West Hatch High School, our priority is the well-being and holistic development of our students. While our attendance policy emphasises regular attendance for educational success, we understand that certain medical conditions or individual circumstances may significantly impact a students' ability to attend. We aim to be inclusive and accommodating, recognising situations may be beyond the control of the student or their parents/ carers.

We strongly encourage open communication between parents and the school regarding any medical needs or circumstances that might affect attendance. Providing documented proof of diagnosed medical conditions helps us better understand and effectively support the student's needs.

It's important to note that we strive not to penalise students whose attendance is affected by diagnosed medical needs. Our pastoral teams are dedicated to collaborating with families to provide necessary support, ensuring that circumstances beyond their control do not hinder the student's educational progress.

We acknowledge and celebrate any improvements made to a student's attendance, aiming to recognise these achievements whenever possible. The welfare of our students is paramount, and our commitment to inclusivity remains integral to our approach in supporting every individual within our school community.

<b>At Risk Strategies that may be used to support your child to improve their attendance to school</b>		
1	1-2-1 form tutor/ Pastoral Team interventions	Ongoing throughout period of low attendance
2	Formal attendance letter issued to family	Each half term - letter
3	Pastoral team communication with family and student	During period of low attendance
4	Parental meeting with Pastoral Team	During period of low attendance
5	Referral to external agencies may be implemented where necessary	During period of low attendance
6	Attendance Support Plan put in place	Attendance plan created within week of threshold being met
7	Home visit may take place where necessary	During period of low attendance
8	Families at risk of legal action by Local Authority	During period of low attendance
9	Referral to children's services will be implemented where necessary	During period of low attendance

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At West Hatch, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

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

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

## ATTEND TODAY – ACHIEVE TOMORROW

### Expected – Aspirational Attendance [95 – 100% attendance]

*Maximises chances to make more than significant academic progress*

#### Strategies:

- School attendance communication to families at start of each half term – see Essex & WH parent leaflet on attendance
- Positive letter home via parentmail
- Achievement points awarded
- Certificate of attendance in rewards assembly

### Satisfactory but at-risk attendance [92-94%]

*Absence could begin to have a negative effect on progress. With intervention achieve expected-aspirational attendance*

#### Strategies:

- 92-94% in touch (parentmail) message sent to families
- School attendance communication to families at start of each half term – attendance leaflet for parents Essex CC
- Improvement strategy used by pastoral team to improve and support with attendance (Form tutor meetings with students to set targets)

### Emerging attendance Concern [90-92% attendance]

*Absence begins to have a negative effect on progress  
Students are at risk of becoming a Persistent attendance concern*

#### Strategies:

- School attendance communication to families at start of each half term - attendance leaflet for parents Essex CC
- Improvement strategy used by pastoral team to improve and support with attendance (FT meeting> HOH meeting> target setting)
- 90-92% in touch (Parentmail) message sent to families
- If 2<sup>nd</sup> half term still in category with no improvement send Notice to improve letter home and escalate using strategies below

### Significant Attendance Concern [below 90% attendance]

*Absence is having a negative effect on progress, attainment and wellbeing*

#### Strategies:

- School communication to family each week - attendance leaflet for parents Essex CC followed by importance of attendance message
- At Risk strategies used by pastoral team – FT> HOH> HOY communication with family and student
- Parental Meeting with Pastoral Team
- Attendance report
- Letter 1 (at end of half term)> Letter 2> Notice to improve
- Referral to external agencies may be implemented where necessary
- Attendance support plan may be put in place

### Serious Attendance Concern [below 75% attendance]

*Absence is persistent and having a sustained negative effect on progress, attainment and wellbeing*

#### Strategies:

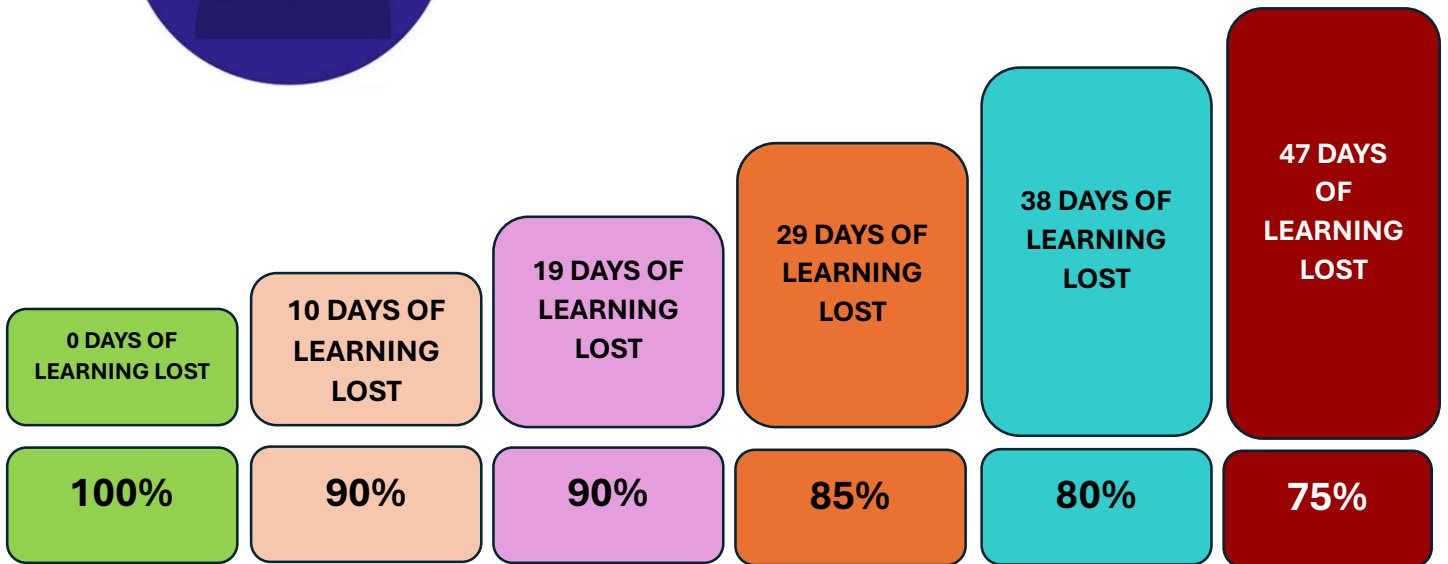
- Same strategies used as per significant attendance concern
- Home visit takes place with DSL and Family Support Worker
- Families at risk of legal action – Essex Council

### Severe attendance concerns [below 50% attendance]

*Absence at this level now constitutes educational neglect and causes significant risk and harm to the progress, attainment and wellbeing of the young person*

#### Strategies:

School attendance communication to family each week  
All strategies as per Serious Attendance Concern category  
Referral to children's services will be implemented where necessary



**Expected Attendance**  
 Maximised Learning opportunities. Likely to make excellent progress

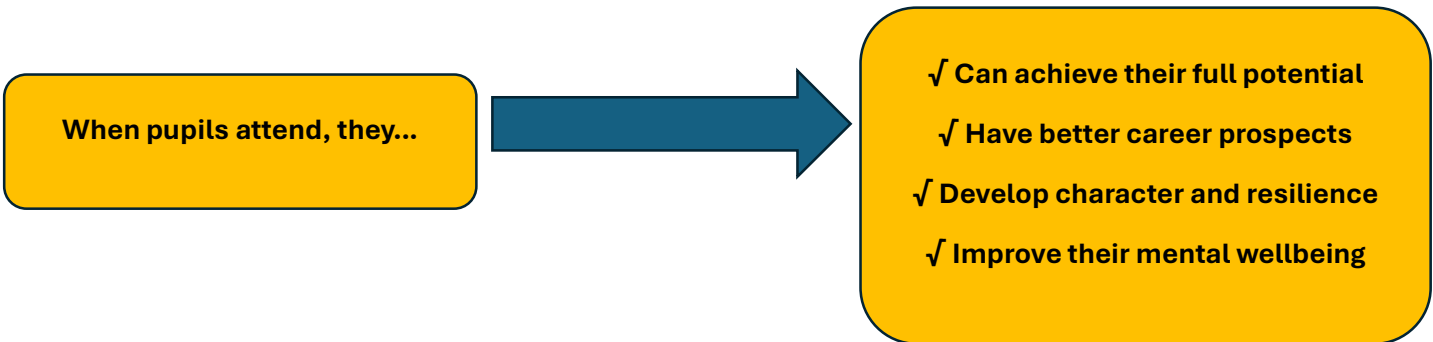
**Concerning**  
 Missed learning opportunities. Less likely to make progress

**Serious Concern**  
 Attendance is a significant barrier to learning and severely impacts progress

Positive recognition  
 Attendance certificates and achievement points

Contact with home.  
 Communication with local authority, at risk of legal action. School intervention

Meetings with families.  
 Local Authority involvement and legal action. Child is missing out



## 1. Key School Contacts

<b>Deputy Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion:</b> Mrs Natalie Steadman	<a href="mailto:nsteadman@westhatch.net">nsteadman@westhatch.net</a>
<b>DSL/ Attendance Champion:</b> Mrs Anjala Sharma	<a href="mailto:ASharma@westhatch.net">ASharma@westhatch.net</a>
<b>Attendance Officer:</b> Miss Carol-Anne O'Dwyer	<a href="mailto:CODwyer@westhatch.net">CODwyer@westhatch.net</a>
<b>Designated Governor with responsibility for attendance:</b> Mrs Stephanie Field	<a href="mailto:admin@westhatch.net">admin@westhatch.net</a>
<b>Reporting student absence:</b>	<a href="mailto:Stuabsence@westhatch.net">Stuabsence@westhatch.net</a>

## 2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building 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.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and sharing 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 keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- › Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure 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
- › Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and supports pupils' individual needs
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- › Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- › 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

- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training in attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy Headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers 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
- Communicating 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
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers 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 Senior attendance champion (Deputy Headteacher) is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for 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
- 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 officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- 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 education welfare officers / safeguarding team to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.5 Class teachers/ Form tutors**

Class teachers/ Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information via Edulink/SIMS within the first ten minutes of the lesson every day.

### **3.6 School support staff**

School support staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absences on a day-to-day basis and record them on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Pastoral team where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents**

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 on time
- › Call the school to report on their child's absence following the absence procedures below.
- › 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
- › Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the student absence line – see absence procedures below.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day, on time
- › Attend every timetabled session, on time

### **3.9 Absence Procedures**

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

Name: Miss Carol-Anne O'Dwyer

Email address: [attendance@westhatch.net](mailto:attendance@westhatch.net)

We monitor and review all pupils' absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 09:00am, when our register closes;
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail to report your child's absence, you may receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9:00am;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence. Medical evidence may be requested where your child is having multiple periods of absence which are reported as being due to medical reasons. When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness

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

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. 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 a place other than school
- > Absent
- > Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- > Whether the absence is authorised or not
- > 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

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

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 3.15pm/9.20pm depending on Key Stage. On Tuesday the day ends at 2.45pm

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school absence number – see reporting procedures and contact details above.

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.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents 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 pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- > Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- > After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Persistent lateness undermines learning, behaviour, and safeguarding routines. The following systems are in place to ensure punctuality across the school:

- All pupils must arrive by 8.40am at the latest. Gates will be locked at 8:40am.
- Reception sign-in: students arriving after 08:40 must sign in; receptionist alerts duty staff to escort pupils to class.
- Registers close at 09:10. Any student arriving after this time will receive a 'U' code (late after registers close).
- Teachers must log lateness on SIMS at the point of arrival to tutor or lesson. SLT, Heads of Year and Pastoral Managers are present at the gate and corridors during key transitions.
- Tutors review lateness weekly and call parents of students who are late.
- Punctuality heatmaps and weekly tracking identify repeat offenders and top improvers.

#### Sanctions and Escalation

The following escalation ladder applies to lateness to school and lessons:

Late to Lesson:

Each late to lesson is logged as 2 points and follows the school's behaviour policy:

- 0–2 points: No sanction
- 3–5 points: 30-minute detention
- 6–7 points: 1-hour detention
- 8+ points: 1-day isolation

Late to School:

Stage 1 – 1st & 2nd late in a half-term: 30-min lunch detention; parent informed.

Stage 2 – 3rd late: KS3 – 3 lost breaks; KS4 – 3 lost lunches; placed on punctuality report.

Stage 3 – 5th late: KS3 – 5 lost breaks; KS4 – 5 lost lunches; 1-hour Headteacher's detention; morning calls initiated.

Stage 4 – 8th late: Attendance Panel meeting with AHT, HOY, EWO and parent.  
Stage 5 – Continued non-engagement: escalation to Attendance Policy procedures and possible Fixed Penalty Notice.

### Support and Interventions

The school recognises that some students and families require additional support to improve punctuality. Interventions include:

- Punctuality Reports for repeat offenders.
- Morning phone calls for vulnerable students.
- Mentor check-ins and breakfast club access.
- Parental workshops on routines and attendance.
- Barriers & Support Plans with practical strategies (e.g., alarm clocks, mentoring).
- Corridor sweeps and on-call punctuality officer.
- Student punctuality ambassadors promoting on-time arrival.
- Pastoral documentation to evidence support for U codes and legal compliance.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Teachers: log lateness on SIMS, stand at doors during transitions, apply sanctions.
- Receptionist: ensure late students sign in and are escorted to lessons.
- Attendance Officer: apply U codes, generate reports, and coordinate interventions.
- Heads of Year: lead parental engagement and oversee punctuality reports.
- Tutors: monitor weekly punctuality and call parents.
- SLT: oversee consistency, monitor data, and report to governors.

## **4.5 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 on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- > 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
- > Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the external agencies where necessary.
- > 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, start formal proceedings by issuing a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention where deemed appropriate.

## **4.6 Reporting to parents**

The school will regularly inform parents (about their child's attendance and absence levels via half term analysis and letters that subsequently follow this.

## 5. Authorised absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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 a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- › Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- › Study leave
- › A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- › Exceptional circumstances

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

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):

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

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

“Rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur”. Examples include:

- › Medical emergencies
- › Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)

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, taking into account 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 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. Please email [admin@westhatch.net](mailto:admin@westhatch.net) The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

## **5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence**

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 for religious observance
- › Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- › If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

## **5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)**

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons 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

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

We will hold attendance incentives throughout the year. We will reward good attendance and do so publicly assemblies and the use of certificates and other rewards.

## 7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and 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.

### 7.1 Attendance Contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

### 7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful; we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

### 7.3 Notice 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.

A notice 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.

It 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, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't 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

### 7.4 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), 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, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority 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

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.

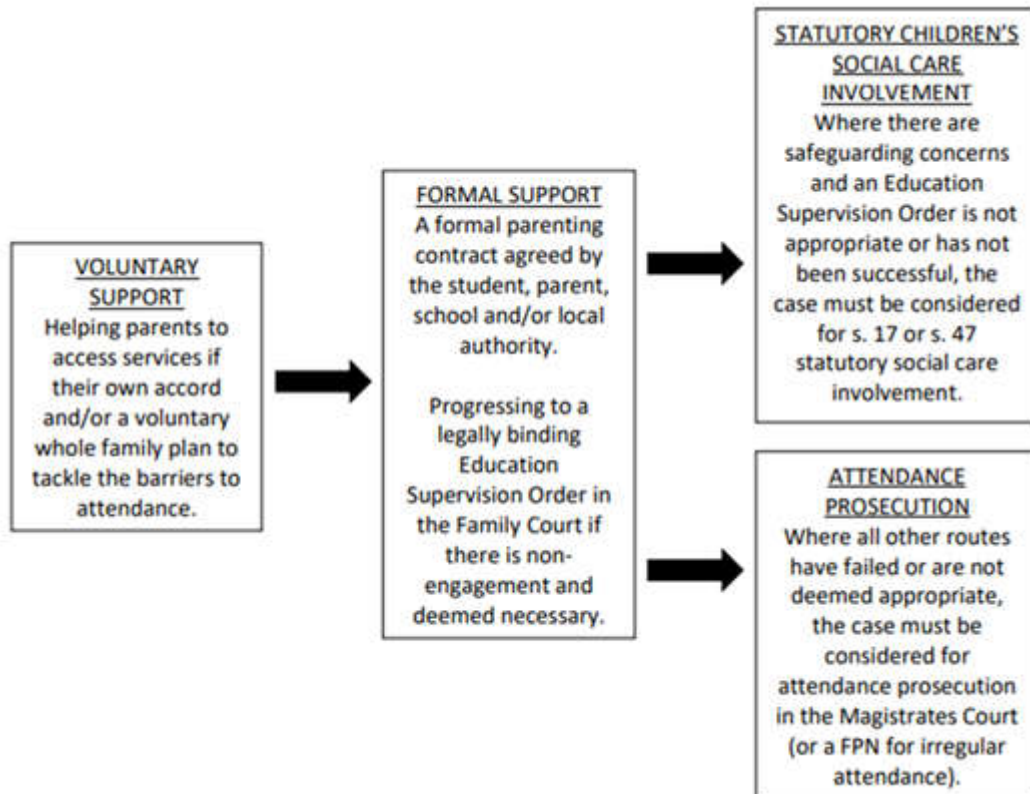
If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

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.

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). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.



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

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

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority.

We recognise that some pupils face complex barriers to regular attendance, including but not limited to: health conditions, emotional or mental health difficulties (such as anxiety or avoidance of school), social or family challenges, or other circumstances outside the school's immediate control. In these cases, our approach is rooted in partnership, early identification and responsive support, in line with the "support-first" ethos.

#### Working with families and pupils

- We actively engage with families and pupils from the first signs of concern, recognising that attendance is a shared responsibility. We seek to build trusting relationships, listen to the individual barriers experienced, and involve the pupil and family in designing support.
- Each pupil with complex attendance barriers will have a named point of contact in school (for example, the Attendance Lead, Pastoral Lead or SENCo) who will co-ordinate communication with the family and external partners.
- We arrange meetings (as appropriate) which include the pupil, parents/carers, school leads and, where necessary, external agencies (for example health, local authority attendance teams, emotional/mental health services) to ensure a joined-up approach.
- The school and family will agree an individualised plan (which may include an Attendance Contract or equivalent) setting out clear and realistic steps towards improved attendance, adjustments required, responsibilities of each party, and review dates.
- We maintain regular and open communication: providing updates to families, checking in with pupils, and responding promptly if attendance deteriorates again.

#### Removing in-school barriers

- We undertake an early and ongoing assessment of any in-school factors that may be impacting the pupil's attendance, such as:
  - timetabling issues (e.g., overly challenging transition times, late starts)
  - curriculum or classroom environment (e.g., sensory issues, unstructured time, large groups)
  - pastoral or peer relationships (e.g., bullying, friendship difficulties, social isolation)
  - emotional or mental health support (e.g., anxiety about school, emotional-based school avoidance)
- According to need, we put in place reasonable adjustments and bespoke support, including but not limited to:
  - a phased or part-time return to school with scheduled check-in with an identified member of staff
  - flexible registration or welcome routines, alternative arrival points or mentoring support

- targeted interventions (e.g., small group work, buddy systems, peer mentoring, wellbeing check-ins)
- liaison with health or mental health professionals to coordinate school-based support or reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where applicable.
- We monitor attendance and engagement data at pupil-level (weekly or more frequently if needed) and use triggers (such as unauthorised absences or persistent lateness) to escalate the support plan or review it.
- The school ensures that staff receive training and are aware of the range of attendance-barrier issues (including complex ones such as anxiety, SEND or family circumstances) so they can respond sensitively and appropriately.
- We will regularly review the effectiveness of the support plan and adjust it in consultation with the family and pupil. If, despite sustained support, attendance does not improve, we will work with the local authority's attendance/educational welfare service to explore further interventions or legal routes — but always as a last resort and after exhaustive support efforts, consistent with the “support-first” model.

## **8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health**

We recognise that an absence from class because of physical illness or mental health difficulties (including but not limited to chronic health conditions, hospitalisation, medically-unexplained symptoms, anxiety, emotional-based school avoidance) presents distinct challenges for ongoing attendance and educational engagement. Our approach is proactive, flexible and collaborative, in line with the statutory guidance in Working together to improve school attendance.

### **Working with Families and Pupils**

- From the first indication that a pupil may be absent or disengaged due to health reasons, we engage with the family and pupil to understand the nature of the health need (physical or mental) and how that interacts with school attendance.
- We nominate a key member of staff (for example the Attendance Lead, Pastoral Lead or Special Educational Needs Coordinator) to act as the main point of contact for the family, the pupil and any external professionals.
- The school arranges inclusive meetings (in person or virtual) with the pupil, parent/carer, school staff and, where appropriate, healthcare/mental-health professionals or the local authority's attendance/education and health teams. Our aim is to co-produce a plan that supports the pupil's return or engagement.
- We maintain regular, open communication with the family and pupil: keeping them updated, checking in on wellbeing and progress, and responding swiftly if further support or adjustment is needed.
- We support parents/carers in their role and ensure they are aware of what the school can do, how we will accommodate the pupil's health needs, and how the family and the school will share responsibility for transitioning back into full engagement.

## **Adjustments the School May Make**

- We recognise that a pupil's health absence may require reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 and/or a phased return, part-time timetable, blended learning (school + home) or other flexible arrangements.
- **Specific examples may include:**
  - A phased re-introduction to school (e.g., start with mornings only, or half days, increasing gradually) with a regular check-in with an allocated staff member.
  - Alternative arrival or departure routines (to avoid busy corridors or transitions) or a reduced timetable for a defined period.
  - Provision of a quiet or safe space in school to support the pupil when they feel unwell or anxious, or access to a mentor or pastoral support.
  - Curriculum adaptations: for example access to remote lessons or from-home work when appropriate; ensuring missing learning is scaffolded; providing buddy/peer support.
  - Liaison with healthcare professionals (school nurse, CAMHS, physio, occupational therapy) to ensure school is aware of the pupil's needs and that support is coordinated.
- We review the plan regularly (at agreed intervals) with the family and pupil and adjust as needed. We track the pupil's attendance, engagement (online/in-school) and wellbeing data, and use triggers (for example repeated medically-related absence) to prompt review.

## **Additional Support Provided**

- Where absence is prolonged or repeated, the school will work with the local authority, health/mental-health services and other external partners to secure suitable education provision to maintain the pupil's learning and connection to school (for example via outreach, alternative provision, remote learning).
- We ensure that the pupil's re-integration is handled sensitively; for example with a return-to-school meeting, key staff aware of the pupil's circumstances, peer support or mentor assigned, and a review date set.
- We train and remind staff of the importance of recognising barriers caused by health (physical or mental) and ensure that they understand the flexibility needed, and the importance of avoiding stigmatisation.
- The school keeps records of absence reason codes, ensures parents/carers know how to report illness / medical absence, and supports families in accessing support (for example help with healthcare referrals, counselling, linking with external agencies).

## **8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance**

### **Supporting Pupils with Additional Barriers to Attendance**

This includes pupils who may be:

- registered as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- identified as disadvantaged (for example via the pupil premium, service children, or other socio-economic factors)
- known to, or previously involved with, children’s social care (for example in need, looked after, previously looked after)
- subject to other significant barriers to attendance (for example young carers, children in families affected by ... etc)

### **Our Approach**

We recognise that pupils experiencing one or more of these barriers may require timely, appropriate, targeted interventions and reasonable adjustments to ensure they can attend regularly and engage fully in school life. This aligns with the expectation from the Ofsted “Expected standard” for attendance and behaviour — namely that interventions should be “timely and appropriate, well-chosen and targeted.”

### **Early identification and partnership working**

- We monitor attendance data (daily/weekly) and patterns of absence at pupil-level, with a specific focus on identifying any vulnerable pupils or groups (including those with SEND, in care, young carers or disadvantaged). This reflects the “Expect, Monitor, Listen and Understand, Facilitate Support...” model from the Essex toolkit.
- For pupils identified as having additional barriers, we engage promptly in discussion with the pupil, their family and relevant staff (for example pastoral lead, SENCo, attendance lead) to understand the nature of the barrier, the pupil’s voice, family circumstances, and any external service involvement.
- We adopt a collaborative approach: working with families, external agencies (such as children’s social care, SEND services, youth services, health services or charity partners) and the pupil, so that plans are contextually appropriate and inclusive.
- Where a pupil is known to children’s social care, we ensure coordination with the child’s social worker, the virtual school (if applicable), and any multi-agency plan or review (such as a child in need plan, looked after child plan).

## **Reasonable adjustments and targeted interventions**

- We recognise that quality first teaching and inclusive school practice are the foundation for all pupils, particularly those with SEND or disadvantage. This means ensuring classroom environments, resources, and pastoral support are accessible and responsive.
- In addition, for pupils with attendance barriers, we will consider and implement targeted support or adjustments, such as:
  - A bespoke Attendance Support Plan (or equivalent) with specific, realistic steps towards improved attendance, responsibilities for school/family/pupil, review dates and outcomes.
  - Flexible timetabling or phased returns (where appropriate) for pupils whose barriers (SEND, care experience, young caring role etc) make full-time attendance immediately challenging.
  - Additional academic catch-up, mentoring, peer-buddying, pastoral check-ins or alternative provision options to maintain connection to school and reduce the risk of disengagement.
  - Wrap-around support: e.g., breakfast/after-school clubs and liaison with external agencies for family support.
  - Ensuring that the pupil's needs under the Equality Act 2010 (where applicable) are met—so that any disability-related adjustments are in place, and barriers such as environment, transitions, peer relationships, or curriculum access are addressed.
- The school ensures staff have training and awareness of how attendance barriers intersect with SEND, care experience, disadvantage and other factors, so that the support is consistent, timely and sensitive.

## **Review, monitoring and escalation**

- Attendance, engagement and wellbeing for pupils with additional barriers is reviewed regularly (for example fortnightly or monthly depending on need). Progress is tracked, feedback to family/pupil is maintained, and the plan is adapted as required.
- If the pupil's attendance does not improve despite tailored support and adjustments, we will escalate in line with our policy: engaging the local authority attendance/educational welfare service, and working with partners to consider more intensive interventions (for example multi-agency meetings, parenting contracts, alternative provision or legal routes) only as a last resort.
- We ensure transparency with families about attendance expectations, the support offered, and the steps of escalation. Communication is timely, non-judgemental and personalised.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

## 8.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We recognise that returning to school after a long or unavoidable absence—whether due to illness, medical treatment, family crisis, exclusion, or other exceptional circumstances—can be a significant adjustment for pupils and their families. Our approach prioritises reconnection, emotional readiness, and gradual re-engagement, rather than an immediate focus solely on attendance data.

### Principles

Our support for reintegration is guided by the following principles, in line with the Essex *Support First* model:

- Support before sanction — ensuring that absence-related challenges are met first with understanding, planning and assistance.
- Partnership and co-production — working collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers and, where appropriate, external professionals to plan and manage the return.
- Timeliness and proportionality — interventions are put in place as early as possible and are tailored to the level of need and duration of absence.
- Consistency — all staff are aware of and contribute to the reintegration plan to ensure a coherent, supportive experience for the pupil.

### Working with Families and External Agencies

- As soon as a lengthy absence is anticipated or confirmed, the school will establish and maintain regular communication with the family. This ensures the pupil remains connected to school, is aware of ongoing learning, and feels prepared for eventual return.
- We liaise with relevant professionals (for example, medical staff, education welfare officers, SEND caseworkers, social workers, or the Virtual School) to coordinate support.
- A reintegration meeting will be held prior to or on the pupil's return, involving the family, pupil, and key school staff (e.g. Attendance Lead, SENCo, Pastoral Lead). The meeting will agree:
  - a phased or flexible return plan (if needed),
  - any reasonable adjustments or support measures,
  - clear responsibilities and review dates, and
  - methods for monitoring progress and wellbeing.

### In-School Adjustments and Support

Depending on the pupil's needs and reason for absence, the school may implement:

- A phased re-entry timetable, increasing attendance gradually to reduce anxiety and build confidence.
- A designated mentor or trusted adult for daily or weekly check-ins to monitor progress and emotional wellbeing.
- Adaptations to curriculum, workload or timetable to ease transition (e.g. catch-up sessions, reduced homework, or flexible deadlines).

- Provision of a quiet or safe space to support emotional regulation or manage sensory overload.
- Use of peer support or buddy systems to help with social reintegration and belonging.
- Collaboration with teaching staff to ensure lessons are accessible and expectations are appropriate.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- The reintegration plan will include clear milestones and review points (typically fortnightly at first).
- Attendance, engagement and wellbeing indicators will be monitored to identify emerging difficulties early.
- Adjustments will be amended as needed in partnership with the family and pupil.
- If the pupil's attendance declines again, the school will re-engage the *Support First* framework—re-examining barriers, refreshing the plan, and involving external agencies if appropriate.

## **9. Attendance monitoring**

### **9.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, 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 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.

### **9.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- › 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

### 9.3 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
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year and Form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in 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

### 9.4 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.

Persistent absence is a student who has the following cumulative sessions missed during these half terms:

Period	Cumulative sessions missed (2 sessions = 1 day)
September to October half term	7
End October to December half term	14
January to February half term	20
End February to April half term	25
End April to May half term	31
End May to July summer term	38

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

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed alongside guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Headteacher.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## **Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

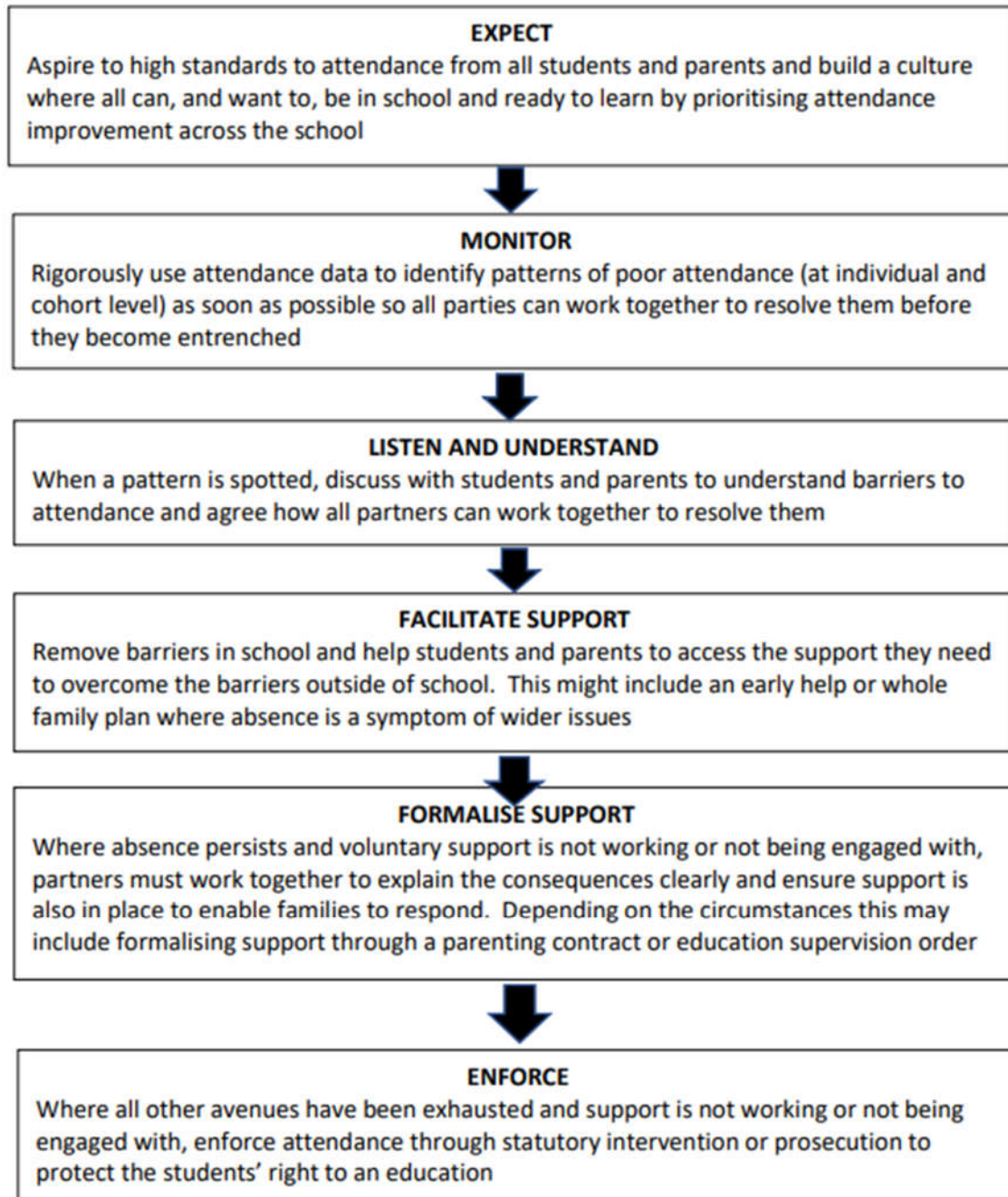
<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision 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
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
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

<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	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
<b>Y1</b>	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
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	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
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

## Appendix 2: Improving attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex (both within and beyond the school gate). West Hatch High School believes the foundation of securing good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all students are ready to learn. As the law entitles every child to a full-time and efficient education, we employ measures to ensure attendance barriers are removed so that attendance is not a limiting factor on key stage 3, 4, and 5 grades. West Hatch High School will endeavour to treat the root cause of absence and remove the barriers by



West Hatch High School systematically analyses attendance data to identify patterns to target specific students and groups of students to raise attendance. Our whole school culture

promotes the benefits of high attendance, and this becomes a learned behaviour. Our SPIRIT values of Self Discipline, Perseverance, Integrity, Respect, Independence and Team West Hatch underpins our expectations of high standards to attendance from all students and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. The universal offer to improve school attendance refers to:

- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting students with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium)
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities must include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to students and parents
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with students and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this must include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's school attendance support team and other partners
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools must help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It must also include clarity on the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include displays, assemblies or in form time. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form, and individual level
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. All staff must have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, this involves unexplained and/or persistent absences from education as well as deliberately missing education

As a school we will work in partnership with families and listen to barriers to ensure a holistic approach is taken with attendance

## Appendix 3: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term referring to reduced or non-attendance at school. Rather than the term 'school refusal', EBSA recognises that this avoidance has its roots in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. EBSA must not be thought of as a deliberate act of defiance, but instead as a complex issue inextricably linked with mental health.

EBSA can be linked to school, lessons (some, all, walking out of lessons), and avoidance of spaces / people. To best support our students this needs to be a full school approach by:

- Building a culture that recognises all emotional reactions as normal and helps students feel safe to express their emotions
- Supports students in developing effective emotional regulation strategies • Providing quiet spaces for resets
- Checking in regularly with students who require it, and make adjustments where possible
- Communicate effectively with parents/carers and involve them in the supportive process

Using the 'Assess, Plan, Review, Do' model we can get targeted support to students who require it. Our guiding principles relate to intervening early, working with family, involvement of external professionals, action planning to show personalised and holistic approach and review. We accept that the journey will not be smooth!

Our strategy is:

- Meeting with the students and asking 'are you feeling sad or worried about school?' • Complete risk and resilience profiles with parents/carers
- Students to complete the push/pull document
- Complete the 'School Attendance Difficulties' assessment form
- Agree a firm and consistent approach to needs and apply with time scales and review points, recording this in the 'my return to school' document

When the student is back to school, during the first review complete a school stress survey and discuss the results and adapt a plan if required.

West Hatch High School will fully support students with emotional wellbeing needs through a range of reasonable adjustments, however, missed attendance from school will need to be 'signed off' by a medical professional to be authorized

### **EBSA Risk Factors**

Some examples of EBSA Risk factors could include:

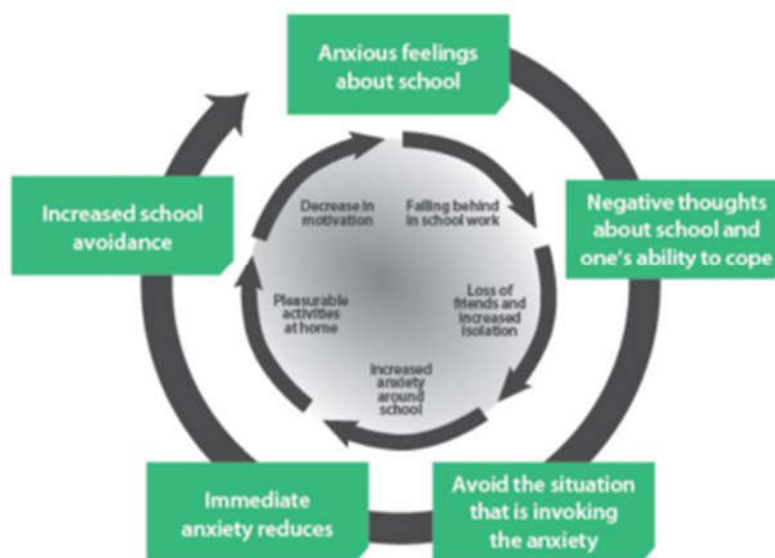
Child/young person	Family / home	School
Anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns	High levels of family stress (including financial stress, conflict, or domestic violence)	Bullying
Difficulties with managing and regulating emotions	Changes to the home environment (including divorce, separation, or parent/carer illness)	Difficult relationships with staff members
Trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	Being a young carer	Difficulties in making and maintaining friendships, being socially isolated
Low levels of self-confidence or self-esteem	Loss or bereavement	Difficulties in particular subjects
Separation anxiety or attachment issues with parent/carer	Family history of EBSA	Demanding, pressurised academic environment
Having a special education need or disability	Poor parental mental health	Transitions: from primary to secondary or through key stages

### Signs of EBSA

These could include:

- Fearfulness, anxiety, tantrums, or expression of negative feelings when faced with the prospect of attending school
- They may complain that they have abdominal pain, headache, sore throat, often with no signs of actual physical illness
- Complain of anxiety symptoms that include a racing heart, shaking, sweating, difficulty breathing, butterflies in the tummy, or nausea, and pins and needles

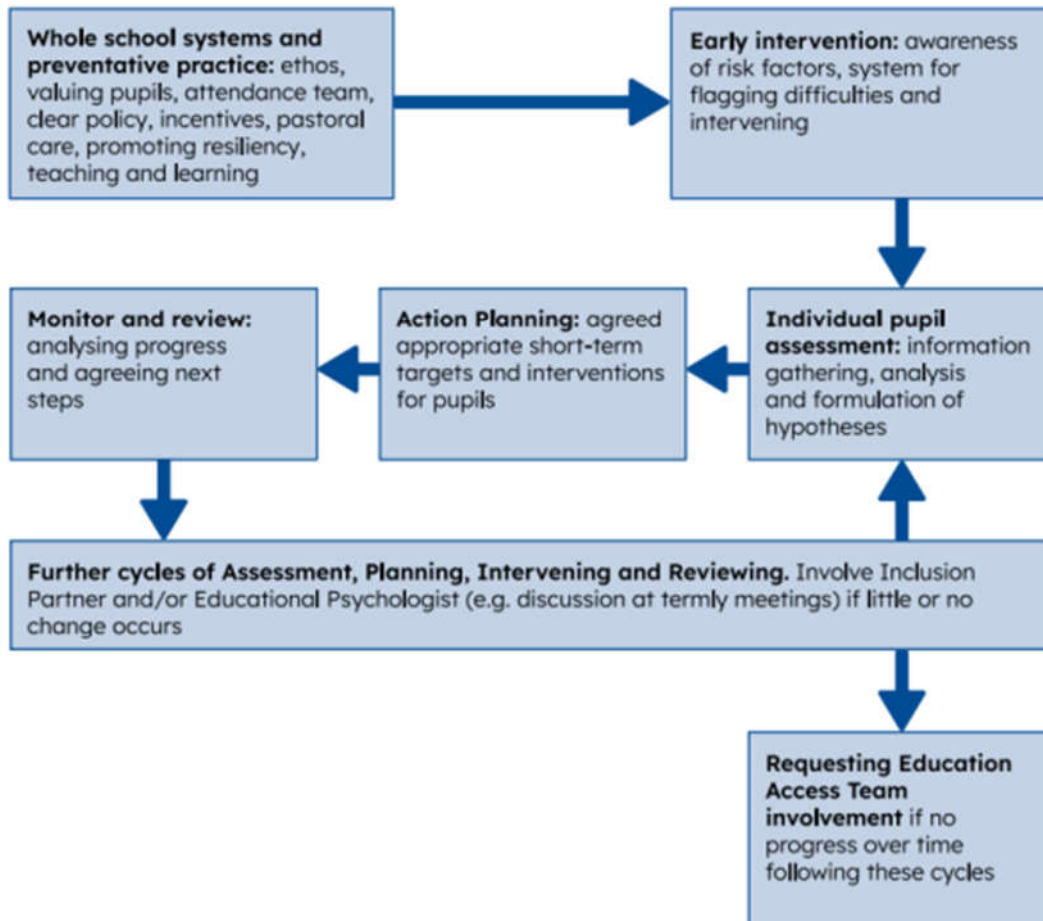
The symptoms are typically worse on weekday mornings and absent at weekends and school holidays.



The longer the problems remain unaddressed the poorer the outcome, as the difficulties and behaviours become entrenched.




### The Whole School Approach

Our school system for maximising school attendance and for supporting individual students with attendance difficulties are shown in the flow chart below:






# School Stress Survey for EBSA students

## School Stress Survey

	I very often or always feel stress at this. I can't cope with it.		I sometimes feel stress. I don't like it but I can cope.		I feel OK about this. I can cope with it easily.
---	---	---	--	---	--

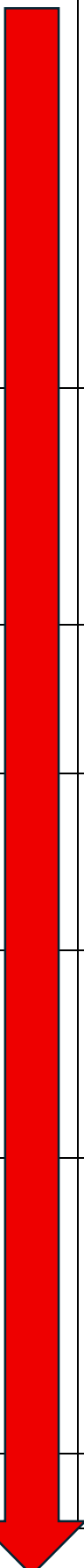
<b>1. Getting Up &amp; Ready</b>  	<b>2. Journey To &amp; From</b>  	<b>3. Assembly</b>  	<b>4. Corridors</b>  
<b>5. Written Work</b>  	<b>6. Break Times</b>  	<b>7. Teacher Q&amp;A</b>  	<b>8. Team / Group Work</b>  
<b>9. Lunch Times</b>  	<b>10. 1 to 1 with Adults</b>  	<b>11. Tests</b>  	<b>12. Homework</b>  

### School Stress Survey – Recording Sheet

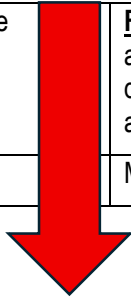
Item	Score			Indicative Words / Phrases
	 = 1	 = 2	 = 4	
1. Getting Up & Ready				
2. Journey To & From				
3. Assembly				
4. Corridors				
5. Written Work				
6. Break Times				
7. Teacher Q&A				
8. Team / Group Work				
9. Lunch Times				
10. 1 to 1 with Adults				
11. Tests				
12. Homework				
<b>Total Score:</b>				
Timetable Issues				
Other Issues				

## Appendix 4: Attendance Intervention Flow Chart

100% attendance – results in letter home/ certificate in assembly (half termly)	
<p><b>Excellent attendance – Student makes progress with learning</b></p>	<p><b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>First day absence</b> – anyone absent and no reason provided – text message sent home by Attendance Officer (AO) – response from family added to SIMS</p> <p><b>Second day absence</b> a text message is again sent home by AO</p> <p><b>Third day absence</b> a text message is sent home made by AO and phone call made by form Tutor</p> <p>Weekly attendance report figures are generated and circulated on Fridays with punctuality data to HOY and Pastoral Managers</p>
<p><b>Attendance falls below 95%</b></p>	<p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p>Half termly the Deputy Headteacher tracks attendance and when attendance falls below 95% a letter is sent home to notify that attendance is below the school expectation with reminder of reporting procedures and impact on lifetime earnings and outcomes. Invite parents to contact school for discussion for early intervention.</p>
<p><b>Attendance does not improve and attendance falls between 92-94% and progress is affected</b></p>	<p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Students with attendance between 92-94% will have a check in with a form tutor who will complete the FT Target setting form (half termly)</p>
<p><b>Attendance does not improve and attendance falls between 90-92% attendance</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4</b></p> <p>Students with attendance between 90-92% will meet with the designated Head of House supporting that Year group. HOH will complete the Support first Check in document</p>
<p>Progress continues to be seriously affected</p>	<p><b>Step 5</b></p> <p>Attendance falls below 90% . Head of Year to initiate the Lets talk we miss you procedures and make initial phone call home to discuss attendance concerns. Complete the attendance on-going decline discussion pro-forma during the online/phone/face to face meeting with the parents</p>
<p>Start to move towards more formal approach</p>	<p><b>Step 6</b></p> <p>Students who fall below 75% will be discussed in BASS meetings and relevant referrals will be made. This can include Social Care referrals, MARF's, Early help and Section 19 referrals to Local Authority Education Access. Ongoing work to improve attendance. Reasons for absence challenged. Meeting to discuss ongoing attendance decline and <b>attendance contract</b> then put in place</p>
<p>Referrals made to external agencies as no improvement</p>	<p><b>Notice to improve issued</b></p>



FPN issued and Attendance Compliance team are now engaged	<b>Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)</b> warning letter issued as appropriate – discussed with Deputy Headteacher (30-day warning period). AO update SIMS with reasons for absence.
Possible prosecution	Move to formal approach



## Appendix 5– Form Tutor Target Setting Form



### Student Information

- Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_
- Form Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

- Current Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_% (as of: \_\_\_\_\_)

- Term: \_\_\_\_\_

### Attendance Review

Total number of sessions missed this term: \_\_\_\_\_

Are the reasons for absence known?  Yes  No

If yes, summarise here:

Punctuality Issues?  Yes  No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reflection (Student Response)

1. Why do you think your attendance is currently below the school target?

•

•

2. What might help you improve your attendance and punctuality?

•

•

### Agreements

We understand that excellent attendance is vital for academic and personal success. We agree to work together to meet the school's attendance expectations.

- Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Form Tutor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_
- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Parent contacted by phone  Email sent  Meeting held

## Appendix 6: West Hatch High School Pupil Support First Check in Sheet



Supporting our children and young people to engage

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are you?</li> <li>• <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about today are you looking forward to / what about today has gone well?</li> <li>• <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you like most about school, and what is the best thing about coming to school?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any concerns about school – subjects, friendships, teachers?</li> <li>• <i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is everything ok at home?</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember depending on the response to ask why?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything you are struggling with or worried about at school? And is there anything the school can do to help you?</li> <li>• Remember depending on the response to ask why?</li> </ul>	

### Additional information

- Remember depending on the response to ask why?
- **Attach current attendance certificate as at date of completion to form – ensure it shows the pupil's name**
- **Copies to be circulated as agreed as part of any internal processes. Examples of colleagues who may benefit:**
  - Form Tutor
  - Head of Year
  - Attendance Officer
  - SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinators)
  - Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy
  - Pastoral Support Team
  - If a Looked after child, or previously looked after – Designated Teacher
  - Senior Attendance Champion
- Ensure a record of this is kept and accessible by all key members of staff – it is advised each pupil has an electronic file with their name and this is saved
  - **SEND TO SCHOOL OFFICE TO SAVE AS LINKED DOCUMENTS ON SIMs**

## Appendix 7: Head Of Year – attendance ongoing decline discussion proforma

### Discussion Aims and Information – for both schools and families

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

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

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

### Supporting our children and young people to engage

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

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

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

How do you feel your child is finding school currently?	
---	--

<p><i>Remember depending on the response to ask why?</i></p>	
<p>Can you tell us what your child enjoys about school?</p> <p>Are there any lessons or subjects they prefer or is there anything that has peaked their interest?</p> <p>Is school important to your child?</p> <p><i>Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?</i></p>	
<p>Is there a particular member of staff your child has a good relationship with?</p> <p><i>Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?</i></p>	
<p>What is important to you, as parent/s, about school / education?</p> <p><i>Remember depending on the response to ask for details and ask why?</i></p>	
<p>Do you know of any concerns your child has about school – subjects, friendships, teachers etc.? Are they struggling with or worried about at anything at school?</p>	

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

**Additional Notes**

## Referrals and Signposting considerations

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

### **Please find below some of the support available**

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

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

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

[Essex Support Directory](#)

[SEMH Support Portal](#)

[Essex Directory of Support](#)

[Essex Frontline](#)

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

[Essex Wellbeing Service](#)

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

[Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service](#)

[Essex Youth Service](#)

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

[Families in focus](#)

[Supporting your Neurodiverse children – booklet](#)

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

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

[Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service](#)

[Essex Directory of Services](#)

[SEND Support - Essex Local Offer](#)

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

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

## Early Help Drop-In Sessions and Consultations

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

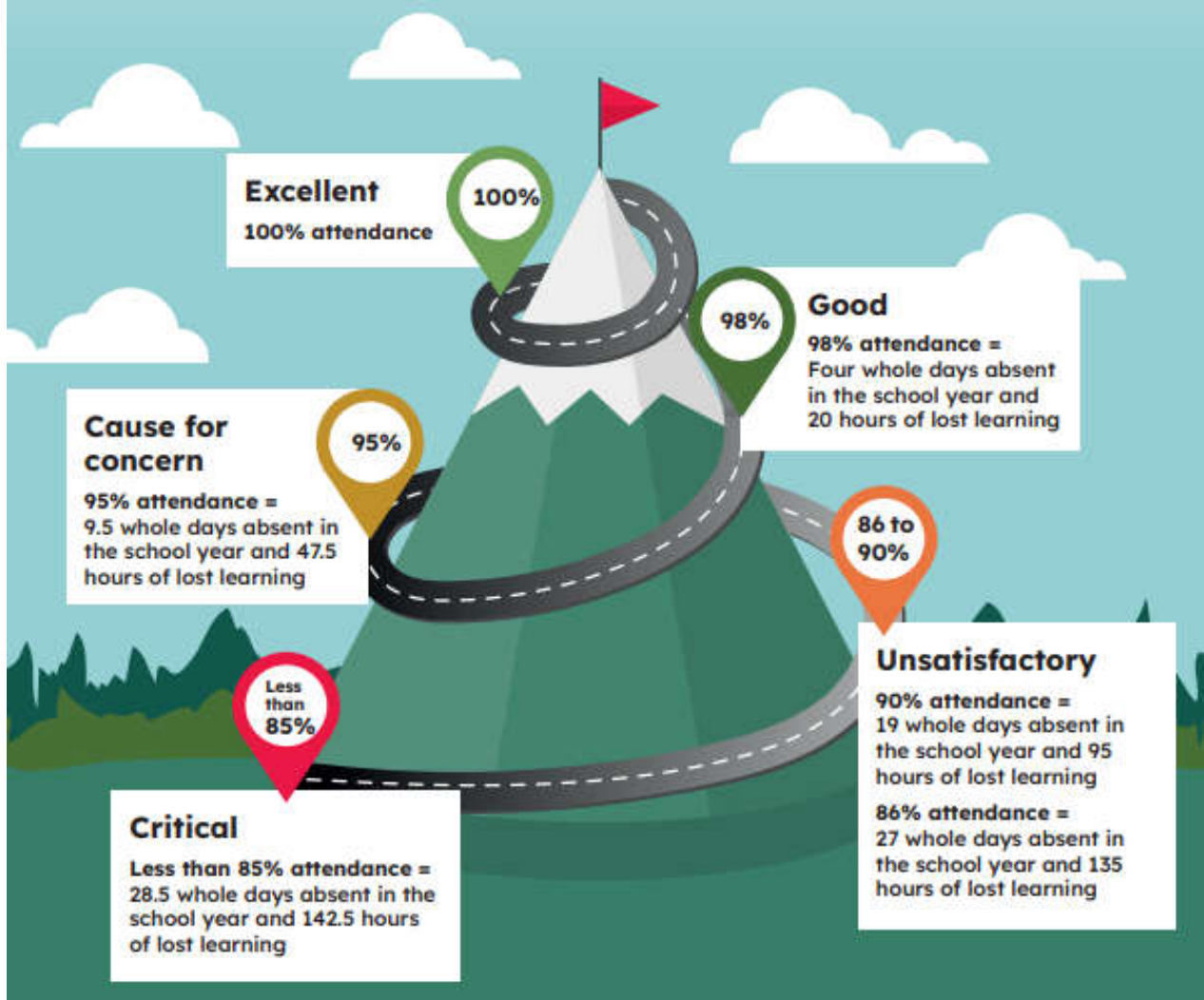
[Early Help Resources for practitioners](#)



## Categorising attendance and learning hours lost

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

# Where does your child sit on the attendance mountain?



## Appendix 8: DFE guidance summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024:

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

### All pupils

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

### Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

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

## Persistently absent pupils

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

## Severely absent pupils

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

## Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

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

## Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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

## Support for pupils with a social worker

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

## Looked after and previously looked after children

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked-after children that support good attendance.</p> <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p>	<p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p>	<p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance.</li> </ul>

## Monitoring

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

## Appendix 9: ESSEX CODE OF CONDUCT: PENALTY NOTICES FOR PARENTS OF TRUANTS AND PARENTS OF PUPILS EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23

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



#### 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 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

<p><b>Who may be fined?</b></p> <p>Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.</p> <p><u>For example:</u> 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.</p>	<p><b>National Threshold</b></p> <p>There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.</p> <p>These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including the U code (late after registers have closed).</p> <p>For example: a 5 day holiday would meet the national threshold.</p> <p>The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.</p>
<p><b>First Offence</b></p> <p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:</p> <p>£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.</p> <p>Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.</p>	<p><b>Second Offence (within 3 years)</b></p> <p>The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:</p> <p>£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.</p>
<p><b>Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)</b></p> <p>The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.</p> <p>Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.</p>	

### Appendix 10: Illness Absence Guidance

#### [DfE external document template – Parent's Responsibilities](#)

## Appendix 11 Attendance legal intervention

### 1. Range of legal intervention

The law provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting Parents.

Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions will be made on an individual case by case basis.

West Hatch High School will work with the local authority to make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution.

West Hatch High School will consider each case on an individual basis and decide whether one or more of the following measures are appropriate:

- Attendance contracts
- Penalty notices
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- parenting orders

West Hatch High School will decide which parent to involve in attendance legal intervention that the Academy can take, but this will usually be the Parent or Parents who have allowed the absence.

West Hatch High School will work within the guidance of the DfE national framework

### 2. Attendance Contract

Where appropriate, West Hatch High School will ask a parent to enter into an attendance contract with the school. This is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school / local authority to address irregular attendance at school [or alternative provision].

An attendance contract is not a punitive tool but is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school to offer an attendance contract, but it will be explored before moving on to other legal interventions. Where the school decides to use an attendance contract, a meeting will be arranged with the parent(s) and pupil. The meeting will allow all parties to share their views on the idea of an attendance contract and what type of support would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance.

The school will usually arrange one attendance contract with all Parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each Parent, then separate attendance contracts for each Parent will be arranged.

Examples of the contents of the attendance contract can be found in chapter 6 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance.

West Hatch High School and / or local authority will work in partnership with the parent to gain their cooperation and compliance throughout the attendance contract process. An attendance contract can be reviewed and amended if necessary.

Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the contract and no reasonable explanation is given for their actions, the school may serve the parent with a warning to explain the attendance contract is not working and may be terminated, and an alternative course of action (such as different legal intervention) may need to be decided upon.

Any non-compliance with attendance contracts will be recorded and may be used as evidence if other legal intervention is necessary to secure a pupil's attendance.

### **3 Penalty Notices issued in relation to attendance**

West Hatch High School can issue a penalty notice where a pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence.

A penalty notice can be issued to each Parent liable for the offence or offences. They will usually only be issued to the Parent or Parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which Parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and must only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

All decisions on whether to issue a penalty notice will be made individually to ensure fairness and consistency.

Penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) and can only be issued by the Headteacher or someone authorised by them (a deputy head), a local authority officer or the police.

Penalty notices must also be issued in line with Local Codes of Conduct which are drawn up and maintained by each local authority. See this in appendix 9

Before the school issues the penalty notice it will check with the local authority before doing so and must also send them copies of any penalty notice issued.

West Hatch High School is required to consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of the pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. The threshold is:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks;
- A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks);
- These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).
- The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, in deciding whether to issue a penalty notice it will make the following considerations:

- whether support is appropriate in the case;
- if a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour or would further support or one of the other legal interventions more appropriate;
- whether a penalty notice is appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 e.g. where a pupil has a disability or a pupil's additional needs.
- Whatever action is taken after the national threshold has been met, the Academy will monitor the impact of the action, and if it does not lead to attendance improvement, it will review the case and consider alternative actions, including additional support.

- Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days;
- a second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action must be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.
- The school can issue a penalty notice where the national threshold has not been met in circumstances where it believes that a penalty notice may be appropriate. This might apply for example, where Parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. There is no right of appeal by Parents against a penalty notice. More details on penalty notices can be found in chapter 6 of the statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance 2024.

#### **4 Notices to improve**

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by Parents or have not worked, a Notice to Improve will usually be sent to give Parents a final chance to engage in support. However, where it is clear that improvement is not being made, the school can issue a penalty notice before the end of any improvement period specified in the Notice to Improve.

A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate and an authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any behavioural impact (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence).

#### **5 Education supervision orders**

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal attendance contract has not been successful, the local authority can apply to the Family Court or High Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) as an alternative to provide legal intervention without a criminal prosecution.

It is the decision of the local authority whether to apply for an ESO. The school is required to cooperate with the local authority and the courts by providing information relevant to attendance, support and previous measures taken by the school to improve attendance.

#### **6 Attendance prosecution**

If a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their Parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Only local authorities can prosecute Parents and is a last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

The school is required to cooperate with the local authority and the courts by providing information relevant to attendance, support and previous measures taken by the school to improve attendance.

## **7 Parenting orders**

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be sought by the local authority and imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and / or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour. The school is required to cooperate with the local authority and the courts by providing information relevant to attendance, support and previous measures taken by the school to improve attendance