

# Southend-on-Sea School Attendance

Guidance for Southend Schools and parents/carers of compulsory school age children attending schools in the city of Southend-on-Sea

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## About the Guidance

This guidance has been produced for Southend schools, academies, and alternative education providers to give detailed information regarding all aspects of school attendance. In addition, parents may also find the information helpful, and schools can direct parents to various sections to support their work to improve pupil attendance.

The School Attendance Service is committed to the principle that all children have the right to a suitable education and that regular, full time school attendance is vital to enable young people to achieve their ambitions through education, training, and life-long learning.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is for all schools to be a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment, where all pupils want to attend and are keen and ready to learn.

The School Attendance Team offer support, information, advice, and guidance to all schools to maximise school attendance, through a whole school approach. Alongside our support to schools, the team also provide early support and interventions to families and pupils and where required formal sanctions to return a pupil to regular attendance.

The School Attendance Team which sits within the Access & Inclusion Service, is responsible for fulfilling the Local Authorities statutory duties with regards to school attendance. This involves meeting regularly with all schools to discuss pupil attendance and the schools actions and interventions to reduce absence, as well instigating formal sanctions through Penalty Notices and Prosecution, where there is evidence of the schools help and support to pupils and their families and written warnings to parents and carers where this has not seen a satisfactory improvement.

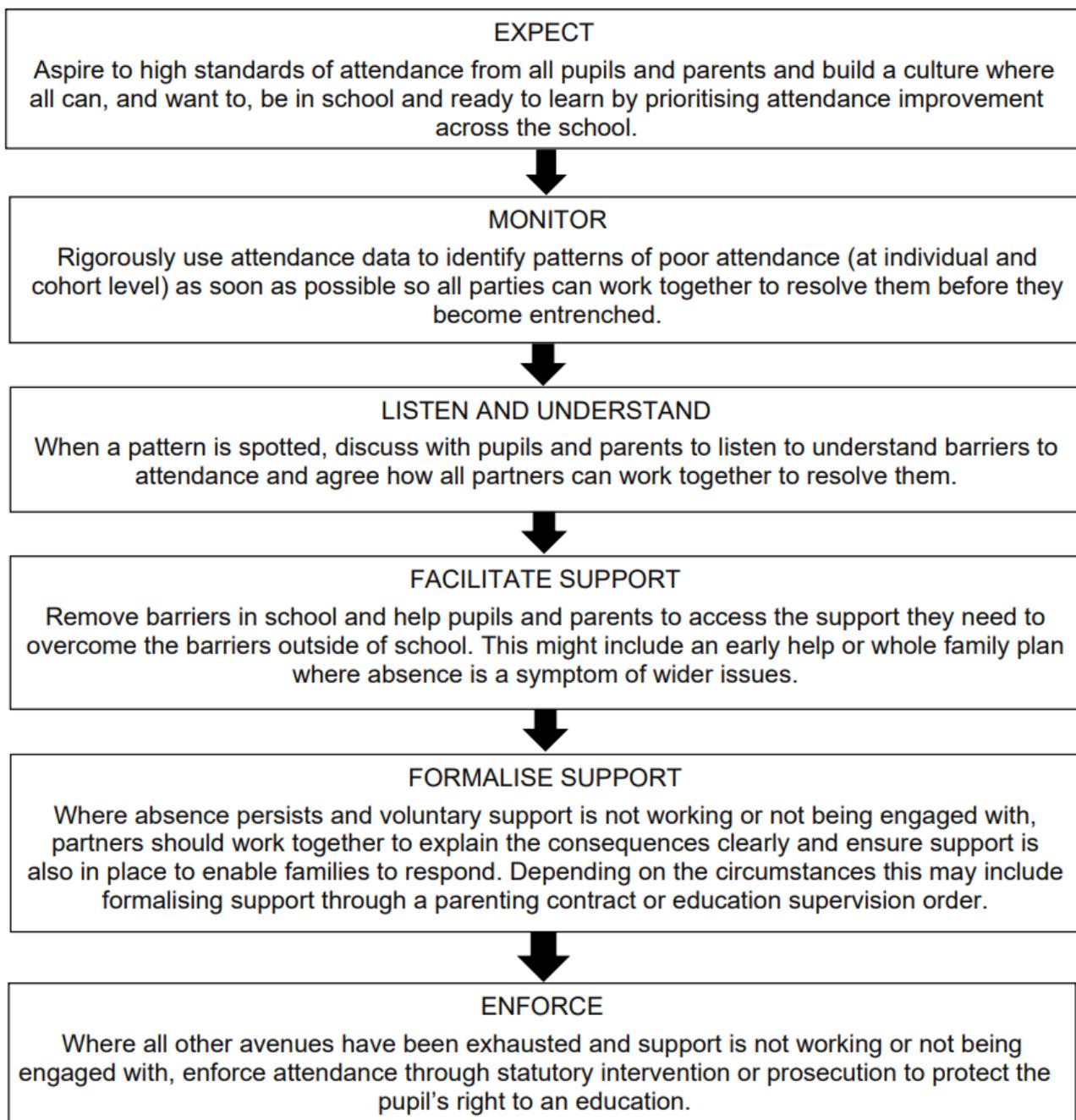
The service operates a traded service for early support and interventions to schools and families, including casework for those schools choosing to delegate some their duties. There is a statutory obligation for all schools to provide early identification, support and interventions through child and family led work to reduce absences. These can be undertaken by pastoral and family support workers employed by the school, the LA traded attendance prevention service, alternative commissioned attendance services or a blended model. Early help and support must evidence how the school has worked together with parents to remove barriers to attending school through parental contracts and interventions, both in school through reasonable adjustments and where appropriate referrals to external support services.

This policy relates to:

- a) Parental responsibility to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school are punctual and attend regularly.

- b) The school's duties and responsibilities to identify and reduce patterns of pupil absence through whole school systems and interventions to improve attendance.
- c) The delivery of the Local Authority's duties in responding to irregular attendance and persistent absence.

The key factors reinforced throughout this guidance reinforces the governments intentions of working together to improve attendance to successfully treat the root cause/s of absence and remove barriers to attendance. Regardless of whether barriers are linked to school, home or wider concerns, schools, and local services are expected to work collaboratively with children, young people and their parents and carers to:



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

## Legislation & Statutory Guidance

- [The Education Act 1996 - sections 434\(1\)\(3\)\(4\) & \(6\) and 444](#)
- [The Education Act 2002 section 175](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) and subsequent amendments 2010, 2011, 2013, [2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) Regulation 2004](#) and [The Education \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE statutory guidance May 2022](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures: DfE Statutory guidance January 2015](#)
- [Children Missing Education, statutory DfE guidance September 2016](#)

## Non-statutory Guidance

- [Guidance for parents on school attendance, Office of the Children's Commissioner](#)
- [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility: DfE Guidance September 2018](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE guidance for schools February 2023](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE effective practice examples for schools \(and parents\) February 2023](#)
- [Increasing attendance with parent messages, DfE supportive 'how-to' guide for schools](#)

## Section 1: Parents' responsibilities to ensure regular school attendance

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

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

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

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

## Parent/Carer Advice

### What is compulsory school age?

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

### When can my child miss a day from school?

The only times your child can miss school is:

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

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

Parents can be given a fine if judged they can secure their child's regular attendance at school but is not taking responsibility for doing so, for example failing to engage in voluntary or supportive measures.

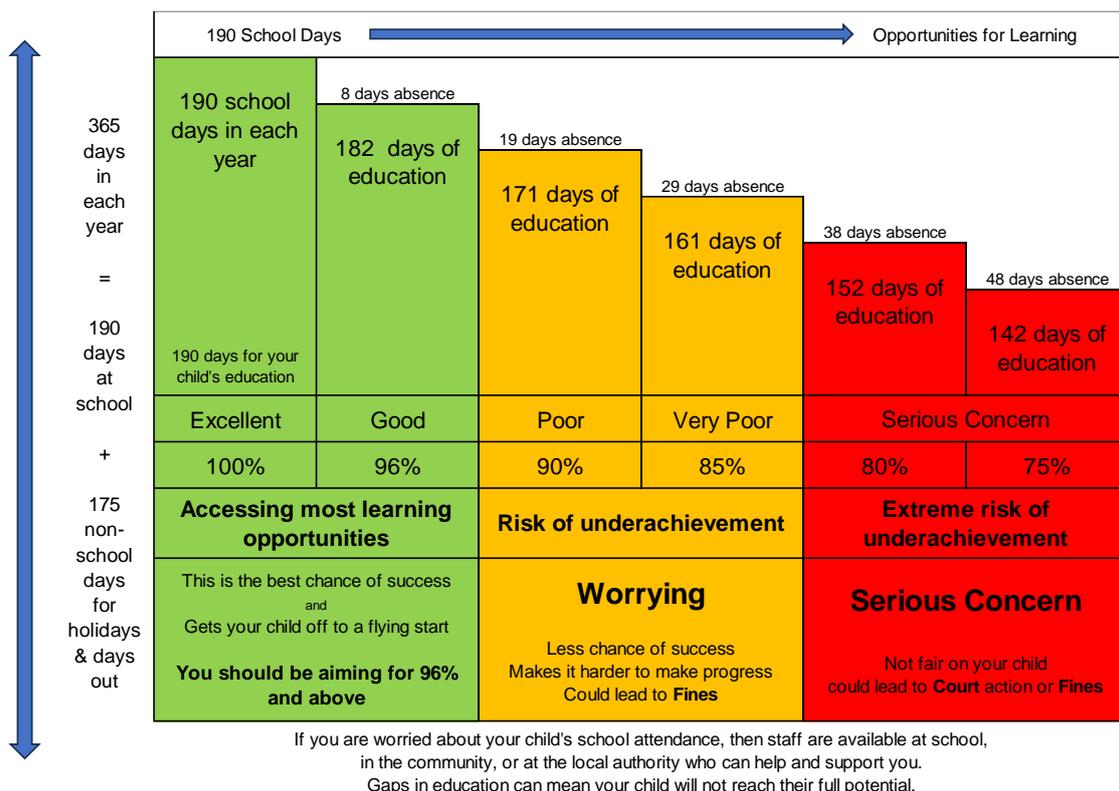
The school will have tried to speak to you and will have sent warnings before any legal action is taken against you. Please use this opportunity to discuss any concerns you have and reasons why your child may not be attending school regularly. Working in partnership with the school as soon as possible is the best way to get support and improve the outcomes for your child.

### Can I book a holiday in term time?

There are 175 non-school days (13 weeks) where parents and carers can take family holidays and days out without missing time from school. Headteachers should only authorise holiday or leave during term-time in exceptional circumstances.

If a parent believes their circumstances for requesting days off in term time are exceptional, they should put requests in writing to the school as soon as possible. If you go on a holiday without the authorisation of the Headteacher, you may be liable to pay a fine and/or be prosecuted for non-attendance.

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



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

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

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

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

- Your child is regularly absent because of illness, to assess how they can help your child by putting the right reasonable adjustments in place.
- In a small number of cases where they have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation cannot resolve the issue.

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

A lack of written evidence will not prevent the right support being put in place or the absence being authorised if you can demonstrate your child was, or is, unable to attend, or is awaiting treatment. If you are asked for evidence you cannot provide, a conversation with the school can help to resolve the issue.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All services open to you and your family including your school, should work together on a single action plan with an identified lead worker to help and support you. In many cases this will be a member of school staff, but it might be a professional from a council service such as a school attendance officer, SEND coordinator, education access advisor, supporting families practitioner, youth justice worker or social worker. Where the needs of your child are mostly linked to their health and wellbeing, this could be a local healthcare worker such as a child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) practitioner, school nurse or consultant.

In exchange, you are expected to agree and take part in accessing the support once it has been put in place. It is advisable to yearly meet with your child's school to review what is and isn't working, involving your child if possible. While waiting for help, you should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible

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

If your child is regularly absent from school because of illness (regardless of whether it is mental or physical) or special educational needs or a disability, they have the same right to a suitable full-time education as any other child. You should work with your child's school to discuss any reasons for absence and their additional needs and make sure the right support is in place.

All schools are expected to provide support in these cases. More information can be found in your child's school's policy on how they support pupils with medical conditions.

Schools are expected to:

- Work with you to make reasonable adjustments to help your child attend. These could include adjustments to uniform, transport, routines, access to support or lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure your child receives the right pastoral care and in certain cases consider a time-limited phased return to school where appropriate, for example for those who have anxiety about school attendance.
- Work jointly with other services including your local council and health services.
- For pupils with a long-term medical condition, either physical or mental health, schools are also expected to make attendance support a key feature of any individual HealthCare plan.
- For pupils with Education, Health, and Care plans (EHCPs), schools must ensure access to any provision outlined within their plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Definition of a parent in law**

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

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

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

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

## **Further Advice**

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

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

For general parent attendance enquiries please email the School Attendance Team on [SchoolAttendance@southend.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolAttendance@southend.gov.uk)

## Section 2: Schools and Academies

This guidance sets out the principles underpinning an effective whole school strategy for attendance, along with actions that schools may consider when improving attendance for all pupils, pupils at risk of persistent absence, pupils who are persistently absent (PA) and pupils who are severely absent. Schools are advised to read this in conjunction with DfE Guidance: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (published May 2022).

### Duties and Responsibilities

The Department for Education (DfE) states that:

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

The most effective schools consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at school, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyse their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. They also recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and, except for schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

For further detail, the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) provides further information on school expectations for each of the above bullet points.

### Expectations of Schools

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. For a school to achieve and maintain high levels of attendance schools need a whole school approach which

demonstrates clearly, to parents, staff and governors, the importance of pupils and staff attending school on a regular and punctual basis.

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities.

To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, all schools are expected to have a clear, written school attendance policy relating to their school expectations, core values and vision for attending school. A successful whole school approach is one which is fully integrated and forms a part of daily school life and ongoing discussions relating to progress. Every member of staff should actively take a role in promoting good attendance and understand the links to safeguarding and keeping children safe.

Every school should have a designated Attendance Lead or Champion who holds a senior position within the school leadership team. Where an Attendance Officer is in post, this officer should be supported by the Attendance Lead to proactively use data to identify patterns of absence and pupils at risk of poor attendance and targeted action in line with the attendance policy and ensuring escalation where there is limited or no improvement.

When inspecting schools, Ofsted inspectors are keen to see that a school can evidence progress and the ability to sustain excellent attendance levels that are consistently better than the average levels being recorded nationally. A key part of achieving excellent attendance levels is ensuring that teaching and learning is consistently good, and that the curriculum engages and meets the needs of all pupils who are on roll at the school.

Literature provided to parents such as school prospectus, attendance and behaviour policies, home school agreements, newsletters, and website information, should convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing, and wider outcomes, and how to access help and support. Communications should also include regular reminders about expectations, sanctions and rewards. The policies should be easily accessible to leaders, staff, pupils, and parents, including being published on the school's website. Parents should be sent it with any initial information when pupils join the school and reminded of it at the beginning of each school year and when it is updated. This must include annual reminders regarding leave during term time and the issuing of penalty notices (refer to the published [Southend Code of Conduct](#)). Parents and carers should be advised that the local authority regularly monitors school attendance and that parents/carers may be invited into school to meet with either the Attendance Lead, Headteacher or the local authority School Attendance Officer, should their child's attendance fall below 93%. Schools must keep evidence of each occasion that one of these communication methods is used as it may form evidence when pursuing formal sanctions.

### **The school attendance register**

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day, once at the start of the first (morning) session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session.

Within the school attendance policy it should state how long the registers will remain open, and this should be shared with parents and applied consistently. The length of time a register is kept open is not stated in law and should be for a reasonable length of time but not for the majority or all the session. A suggested period would be 30 minutes from the start of the session.

Schools are required to record pupil attendance and absence in line with the specific codes set out within [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) and subsequent amendments, and any recent DfE statutory guidance. In their register, schools are required to record whether pupils are:

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

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, schools have a responsibility to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Indicate in their register whether the absence is authorised by the school or unauthorised
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system

Where a pupil is regularly or persistently absent, in addition to their own systems for following up and where appropriate challenging absence, schools are also required to report the details of any irregular pupil attendance to the local authority, providing full details of the pupil, the reasons for absence and whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

A full list of attendance codes and their meaning can be found in [Appendix 1 – School attendance codes](#).

## **Data Analysis by Schools**

Regularly analysing school level data is the key to identifying absence patterns and will enable schools to work with pupils who have attendance levels that are a cause for concern. Analysis can be drawn down in different ways by utilising the school's information management system reports. Examples of different analysis can be by percentages of individual pupils or by grouping such as, year group or subject areas; vulnerable pupil groups such as SEND, free school meals, young carers, EAL, and pupils open to social care; by specific absence code; gender; days; or individual family and friendship groups. As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. It is therefore important that class teachers in primary, and tutors, year and subject leaders in secondary all take an active interest and role in identifying patterns of absence and not leave this solely to the role of the attendance officer or leader.

Schools need to decide what attendance level thresholds will attract further investigation, for example below 93%, and decide who, in terms of members of staff, will be responsible for speaking with pupils and parents about absence and responding in a consistent way in accordance with the school's policy. The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:

- understood by pupils, parents, and carers
- implemented consistently
- reviewed regularly

It is important that schools regularly review their data against the published information to be able to show that they have a good understanding of how their school compares with other primary, secondary, or special schools nationally. It is also important for schools to be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of whether their attendance data is improving and the reasons which may be attributed to this improvement; or deteriorating, and the context which has led to this negative pattern and what strategies are in place to improve outcomes.

Irregular attendance at school is usually an indicator of an unmet need and places a pupil at higher risks of vulnerability and from becoming a child missing from education. Reasons for absence can be related to underlying health needs, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities pupils (SEND), mental health, bullying, exploitation or wider additional needs within the family or the pupil's environment. To be successful in addressing and improving school attendance, early identification and support is vital.

In addition to individual school attendance reporting and monitoring, Southend-on-Sea Local Authority collates all reported pupil attendance of 70% or less and compares these pupils with other risk factors such as exclusion, reduced hours from school, accessing alternative provision and other vulnerabilities. Pupils with high risk indicators are heard at the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Case Management Group where schools may be asked for additional information.

All schools are asked to return information on all chronic non-attenders, in particular those with 30% attendance or less, and specifically what the school is doing to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and increase their access to education.

## **Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Pupils**

When analysing attendance and absence data, staff should be mindful of pupils that are statistically more likely to be at risk of irregular attendance. The DfE's research into [Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils](#) identifies that successful schools have effective strategies for identifying early help and rapid response systems to address poor attendance. This includes staff contacting home immediately when a pupil fails to arrive on time. Where the problem persists, staff work with families to address any barriers they face in getting their children to school. Examples of effective school practice can also be found in [Improving Attendance at School](#) by Charlie Taylor.

Schools should seek to identify any significant gaps in the attendance and/or attainment levels of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities pupils, Free School Meals pupils, Children in Care/Looked After Children, English as an Additional Language, Pupil Premium Grant pupils, and children subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan and demonstrate where there are significant gaps, what strategies have been put in place to reduce and address any concerns.

Where a child with irregular attendance has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), and/or is open to social care as a Looked After Child (LAC), Child in need of Protection (CP) or a Child in Need (CiN), or open to the Youth Offending Service (YOS), the school should report these concerns to the named Local Authority officer such as the SEN Coordinator, social worker, youth offending officer and the Virtual School. This not only alerts the service to a vulnerable child's absence but also promotes working in partnership to reduce any barriers to attending school and improve a child's attendance through multi-agency plans and where appropriate joined up challenge. Do not assume that agencies are aware of a child's absence.

If a vulnerable pupil is continuously absent and the school is unable to contact the family or remains unsatisfied by the response of parents, alert the key professionals as soon as possible, rather than the statutory 10 consecutive days.

For pupils with SEND schools are advised to refer to the Southend agreed [SEND Guidance and Protocols](#) with particular focus on Southend's [SEND Graduated Response and expectations](#).

For pupils who are Looked After Children please refer to the [Virtual Schools Attendance and Persistent Absence Policy](#) and associated strategies and documentation.

## Prevention

Using the school's attendance data and school policy, schools can create a clear process of escalation to ensure that additional needs and vulnerabilities are identified and supported without delay. By setting clear thresholds and aligned support strategies, schools can ensure a fair and consistent approach is adopted as well as who, within the school staffing structure, will take responsibility for intervening once various thresholds are met.

First day contact systems are useful, where a parent has not provided a reason for a pupil's absence and can quickly establish when a child is truanting from school, or where a parent is struggling to get a child into school and requires additional help and support.

A clear policy with thresholds and responses for different levels of absence allows the school to be both consistent with expectations for both staff and parents and pupils. Thresholds should identify when parents can be expected to be informed of concerns and determine when they would be invited into school to meetings and agree a plan of action to improve attendance.

All communications to parents should be engaging and inviting, focussing on help and support, not threatening punitive actions. Even where levels of absence reach a significant concern, requiring a more

formal meeting, the primary aim is always to identify the barriers causing absence and provide help and support before warnings of any formal sanctions.

Schools need to ensure that attendance support is appropriately resourced, using where applicable the effective use of pupil premium funding. This should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with the team around the child and family and wider services such as the School Attendance Service.

## **Attendance Support Meetings and School Attendance Parent Contract**

Before calling an Attendance Support meeting, assess who within the school and externally are working with the child and family. It is good practice to check with your schools Designated Safeguarding Lead to understand if there are any current or historic concerns that may link to a pupils absence such as notifications of domestic abuse or if the pupil is a young carer. Equally, check with your SENCo and mental health leads to identify if the pupil has any recognised special educational needs, disability and/or mental health needs which may also be linked to barriers to attending school.

Where a child already has an existing plan, such as an individual support plan if they have SEND; a HealthCare Plan if they have medical or mental health needs; or a child in need, child protection or personal education plan if open to social care; consider whether the barriers to attending school and plan of action needed to improve the situation is already captured within existing plans and is better placed being monitored through existing plans. Where plans exist, but the pupils absence is not identified, or it is not clear what actions are needed to improve the situation, request an earlier review of the plan, and ensure the pupil's absence is identified and prioritised within the existing plan.

For pupils where there is not any existing plan in place an Attendance Support Meeting should be held where through discussion, a School Attendance Parent Contract is agreed.

When parents/carers are invited to an attendance support meeting to discuss absence, the purpose will be to establish any barriers to learning and attending school. A plan of action using the parent contract should be agreed so that all parties are clear on what is expected following the meeting and who is responsible for ensuring that agreed actions are carried out within school and/or at home and the timescale for improvement. Best practice parent contracts include the desired outcomes, associated actions and how they will be implemented for the child, the parent, and staff within the school, ensuring all are clear on expectations. An example attendance support meeting parent contract can be found in Appendix 3 [School Attendance Parent Contract](#).

When considering the identified barriers to attending school, schools should consider completing the Graded Care Profile 2 tool where there are concerns a child may be suffering from neglect, including educational neglect. In addition, where a parent or pupil requires help and support from an external service, it is important to engage with parents to signpost or refer them to the appropriate service or agency.

Where needs are complex, requiring support across several areas where access to regular and punctual attendance is just one of the needs, a referral to Supporting Families may be appropriate.

If absence is severe (50% absence or more) there must be a team around the child and family formed, with a clear plan of action including the wider teams working with the family and identified lead person working directly with the family. Where the family is open to statutory services such as social care or health care services, they are likely to be the lead professional, however where the team around the child and family is linked to universal or targeted services, it is likely that the school is best placed to be the lead person working with and supporting the family to review their plan and engage with any suggested external services.

Where an attendance target is identified it's easier for the pupil and parent to understand the expectations by accompanying a target percentage with what this means in relation to days or lessons for the period under review. Targets need to be realistic and achievable when considering any additional health needs and identified barriers, and the current level of attendance. Setting targets focussing on just the period under review, allows the pupil and parents to focus on an achievable target and where realistic attend every day.

When staff talk about attendance percentages with parents or pupils, it can be difficult for them to understand why there are concerns. For example, 89% is usually seen as a positive achievement in an examination or test, whereas 89% attendance would warrant a significant level of concern. Parents, carers, and pupils will need to understand that a child with 89% attendance at the end of an academic year will have missed 21 days of school (over four school weeks of learning missed) and classed as a persistently absent student.

The review period of plans will depend upon the individual needs of the pupil and family and the level of concern of their absence. For a pupil with 90% attendance, six weeks may be an appropriate period in which to review how effective the plan is. A child with severe attendance issues may require a weekly meeting to review progress against the plan and intervene with changes in response to needs or achievements.

Where a parent/carer fails to attend meetings with the school, formal letters and parent contracts should be devised by the school and sent out to each person(s) holding parental responsibility or day carer responsibility, to the family home so that the school can evidence that they have taken steps to notify the parent(s) or carer(s) of concerns and have provided them with advice on what is in place and what is expected of the parent and child.

Pupils and parents need to understand very early on what actions and sanctions will be applied if expected improvement is not achieved. In addition to sanctions, it is just as important to recognise where improvements have been made and acknowledge these formally with positive communications and rewards.

## Rewards and Incentives

For rewards to be effective they need to be relevant to the pupil and applied consistently. Best practice would be to engage pupils in consulting on the attendance policy, practice, and rewards (as well as sanctions), and ensure that rewards are meaningful and recognised by pupils.

Promoting school attendance and publishing weekly/monthly class or year group attendance can motivate both staff and pupils to attend school more regularly. Peer challenge can be a healthy response to increasing whole class attendance, but where there are chronic pupil absences for known reasons schools may need to remove some pupils from their data to ensure that pupils do not become disengaged in incentives or peer challenge reinforces a pupil to not attend school.

Popular incentives can be mascots (especially those designed and named by pupils) or attendance stars and cups, which move around each week to the class or form with the best attendance and are clearly displayed on doors or in a special area within the classroom.

Younger pupils may appreciate an additional reward such extra playtime or access to specific resources, as where older pupils may associate more with jumping the lunch queue or having access to healthy treats. Local examples of these are primary schools that have special resource boxes to be used in extra play or golden time. One secondary school had the school kitchen staff bake a special (healthy) cake for the form with the best monthly attendance, where kitchen staff became involved in celebrating success and presenting the treats to the form during tutor time.

Other examples are where schools place pupil's names in a lottery, or through other internal reward systems reviewed each term, with physical rewards, acknowledgements of success, involving local businesses to sponsor prizes. With these incentives not only pupils with 100% have the opportunity for accessing rewards but also those with sustained attendance targets.

Quality reward badges continue to hold presence with most pupils (where they are allowed to be worn and displayed on uniform), along with end of year celebrations, such as afternoon tea with the Headteacher or special trips outside of the usual school day. Consult with pupils (especially those with under 90% attendance) regarding what rewards have meaning and try to embed these within systems within school. In addition, keep rewards fresh and under review as incentives soon become stale without energy and enthusiasm from staff to ensure that they are still relevant and have meaning to their pupils.

There are many examples of successful rewards operating within the City, schools are advised to talk to their peers regarding what works well in relation to celebrating attendance achievements and share best practice.

In addition, staff also respond well to rewards and are key in raising attendance so ideas to motivate and reward your staff will also reap rewards.

## Sanctions

There are many interventions and support strategies that schools can use to help parents in ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time, but where all strategies and access to early help and support has been exhausted or parents have disengaged, schools need to have effective sanctions.

Prior to making a referral into the School Attendance Team all schools are expected to:

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

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

Where improvements in attendance are insufficient, schools must provide a formal letter warning of the possible legal implications of irregular attendance and advising of the possibility of a referral to the local authority. Each warning letter should relate to one pupil only (i.e., each parent should receive one warning letter per child in the case where there are multiple siblings on roll with poor attendance).

All schools wanting to issue Penalty Notices under the Southend Code of Conduct as a deterrent to taking leave during term time, must evidence again that all literature has been provided to parents, such as: school prospectus, attendance and behaviour policies, home school agreements, newsletters, and website information, and includes the warning that parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice if leave is taken without permission. Schools must provide annual written reminders of where to find this information.

Schools must also ensure that once a parent has submitted a request for leave during term time which has not been agreed due to no evidence of exceptional circumstances, they must then provide parents with a warning letter and expectation of actions should they continue to take the time out of school.

For unauthorised leave during term time schools can refer into the School Attendance Team to issue a penalty notice where there have been 6 sessions (3 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year

For unauthorised absence or truancy, Schools can refer into the School Attendance Team when the referral criteria of below 90% attendance with 10% of unauthorised absence in the proceeding 10 weeks (during the current academic year) have been met.

Schools will need to demonstrate how the school has implemented help and support to identify and remove barriers, including any reasonable adjustments made by the school and time to allow any suggested referrals to external early help services to have started their work prior to referral for a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices can also be issued following a schools Attendance Panel meeting. These are usually meetings led by a senior school leader, school governor and when purchased under the traded service, a Local Authority officer.

An attendance panel is only to be used where the school has already and within the last 6 months made attempts to engage and support the parent and pupil through an attendance support meeting and parent contract. This tool is only appropriate where initial help and support from the school had shown some success but has again deteriorated and where there are no known complexities linked to the non-attendance at school.

Penalty Notices may be issued following an Attendance Panel (or LA Pupil Planning meeting) where there have been unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence equating to 10 school sessions or more within a 10-week period (term time) prior to the panel meeting.

If during the attendance panel, the parent or pupil identifies reasons why they have not been attending and is need of additional support to improve their attendance, a further plan of support is needed. For simple actions this could be agreed during the attendance panel, however for more complex needs requiring the involvement of wider school staff (SENCo, head of year, subject leader, DSL etc) and/or services, a separate meeting will be required to discuss and agree the best way forward through a parent contract identifying the different actions for each relevant party to reduce and remove barriers to attending school, before the final warning letter is issued.

Where the warning letter is issued, a Penalty Notice would be issued after the first unauthorised absence after parent had received the warning letter where there is evidence that any plan identified at the panel meeting had been implemented and no additional mitigating factors have been identified by the parent/s or services supporting the family.

Parents must have been issued with a Formal Warning Letter and given opportunities to inform the school of any factors impacting on their ability to ensure their child attends school regularly. Warning letters are valid for 10 school weeks.

Schools can then refer to the School Attendance legal intervention officer to issue the Penalty Notice on the first unauthorised absence. Schools should refer to Appendix 5 – Request the Local Authority hold a Pupil Planning Meeting (PPM). The published Southend [Code of Conduct](#) should be referred to for full information on issuing penalty notices and suggested template letters and guidance.

There are various reasons for school absence, and it is important to acknowledge that statutory intervention will not be appropriate in every case. Where a child is looked after by the local authority, legal action for non-attendance at school is not an available course of action. However, school absence for this

cohort is taken very seriously and schools are urged to work closely with the Virtual School and the pupil's social worker to improve pupil attendance.

Southend schools can provide their own sanctions through letters, meetings, parent contracts, home visiting and formal attendance panels, or may choose to purchase the traded service of the local authority School Attendance Team. Where schools provide these sanctions and challenge independently of the Local Authority, schools must keep all evidence of all communications with the parent as these will form any evidence when issuing penalty notices or pursuing non-school attendance through the magistrate's court. The Headteacher should be aware that where evidence is used from the school, the Headteacher may be required to attend Court if requested by the Magistrate and as such must be available when cases are presented to the court.

For schools purchasing 3 or more hours from the School Attendance traded service their allocated officer will lead on all evidence presented to the court and where requested can fully participate in attendance support meetings, attendance panels and lead on attendance action plans and parent contracts as appropriate and in line with the capacity of the officer in relation to the bought in hours.

## **School Attendance Core Service to all schools**

### **Communication and Advice:**

Through the existing School Attendance Network, the School Attendance Service will continue to attend and support schools in sharing best practice amongst schools, providing a platform for advice and guidance, and delivering local area training on new ways of working.

The team will also share the national and local data captures allowing schools to benchmark their performance and seek early advice and support if overall absence appears to be higher than the average.

### **Termly Targeting Support Meetings:**

Each school will be allocated an Attendance Officer and will receive a termly targeting support meeting to review how schools are accessing and analysing their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree actions.

All schools are required to share pupil level absence data with the Local Authority.

The termly conversation with schools, will include analysing their pupil attendance data as the basis to understand and review trends and patterns of absence, how it compares to the local and national picture, identify pupils at risk and target and agree next steps.

Schools and Officers are expected to have prepared in advance of the meeting the pupils they wish to discuss. Discussions will include actions to be taken by the school, signposting to relevant services and agreeing joint actions for persistently and severely absent pupils that require a Pupil Planning Meeting Parenting Contract and/or legal action such as Education Supervision Orders, issuing penalty notices or moving to Magistrates Court.

The team will continue to ask schools to provide detail on all pupils where their absence is 30% or more at the start of each term. Officers will use this information, along with the current absence data to target which pupils they want to discuss with you at each meeting.

In addition, officers will want to understand the plans in place for any pupils with medical conditions, SEND or open to social care and at risk of low attendance.

### **Targeted Whole School Attendance Review Meetings**

These meetings are targeted to only those schools where through interrogating local and national attendance data the schools performance is causing concern against local and national averages. Senior officers will meet with the senior lead for attendance and other members of the senior leadership team (where appropriate) to support schools with their individual improvement plans and identify recommendations and actions to improve school attendance.

### **Child Employment and Child Entertainment**

Provide consultation to schools on any legislation changes in relation to Child Employment and Child Entertainment licencing, especially where this may be impacting a child's attendance and progress at school.

### **School Attendance Traded Service**

The School Attendance Service will support schools with a range of strategies to improve and maintain whole school and individual pupil's attendance. The Service offers schools training, support, and casework, the aim of the school attendance service is to successfully return children to school and uphold the rights of children to access their education.

When purchasing the School Attendance Service there will be a range of options available to help support whole school and or individual school attendance. The traded offer to school, has been amended to provide more flexibility and response to individual school needs in direct response to school feedback from consultation. For the full breakdown of traded service packages school should visit the [Southend Learning Network](#).

The traded offer is broken into two options: 1 Prevent, Support and Challenge; and 2 Bespoke. Below are some examples of the range of options available via the traded service:

- Warning letters to parents of children with persistent unauthorised absence and/or with persistent lateness.
- Delivering school level Attendance Support Meetings, with school, parent, and child to discuss absence and establish any barriers to learning/attending school. Officer leads on producing the attendance contract with identified actions for parent, school, and relevant services, agreed attendance target, and date for review. Considerations for SEND, health, EHFA and other signposting captured as part of discussion.
- EBSA screening with children and parents to support school based responses to needs.

- School based Attendance Panels for persistent absence
- Case work, (number of cases open at one time will reflect the number of hours purchased and other interventions requested) involving a minimum weekly contact with all live cases to meet with parents and young people to reduce and remove barriers to attending school. Work will be led by the actions in the Attendance Contract, with the emphasis on relationship building, support and challenge.
- School Attendance Audit of school's systems and processes
- Operate 'Late Gates' with a member of school staff
- Provide parent school drop-in's/surgeries for parents in need of advice or support relating to barriers attending school
- Attend school parent coffee mornings, parent evenings and new in-take meetings supporting school attendance expectations
- Attending EYFS parent sessions to reinforce readiness for school and expectations regarding regular attendance
- Recognition and reward letters to pupils with improved attendance
- Specific training for school staff and/or Governors on responsibilities, best practice casework, how to analyse and make best use of attendance data
- Attend and support school celebration assemblies
- Discussion and action (unannounced home visits) for all pupils with unauthorised absence for 10 days or more prior to submitting a CME referral.
- Half termly school attendance review meetings (in addition to the Targeted Support Meeting) to discuss and plan prevention work, (both work by the school and the service) linked to the above areas.
- Bespoke requirements as agreed through the service level agreement.

Schools wishing to discuss accessing the traded offer or amending their current agreement, should contact the School Attendance Team Leader by emailing [SchoolAttendance@Southend.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolAttendance@Southend.gov.uk) or telephoning 01702 212336.

### **Section 3: Formal Legal Interventions**

For schools purchasing the traded Prevent, Support and Challenge package, this section is for information only, as your attendance officer will lead on all initiating, compiling, and presenting all evidence for formal interventions either through penalty notices or prosecution through magistrate's court.

#### **Pre-referral for Penalty Notices or Prosecution**

In most cases parentally condoned absence is the result of complex circumstances that require assessment, support, and challenge (refer to section on Prevention).

From the outset, all school contact with parent/carer(s) regarding school attendance should be treated as potential evidence as it can form part of any subsequent penalty notice or prosecution case. Prior to any referral, schools are required to have worked with, or at least attempted to work with, parent/carer(s) to

improve attendance. As stated in the section above, the minimum support is to have tried to discuss the barriers to attend school through an attendance support meeting or when reviewing an existing plan in place for the pupil. Good quality evidence would include:

- First day calling contact logs
- Referrals to other agencies (including dates of recorded safeguarding concerns)
- Letters and records of other communications (such as emails and text messages)
- Attendance support meeting invites to parent/carer(s)
- Minutes from meetings and school attendance parent contracts
- home visit contact notes

Conversations with parent/carer(s) regarding school attendance matters should be documented; dated; clearly identify all parties present and signed. To be admissible in court, letters must never be sent home with the child or via the book bag, they should always be sent via Royal Mail post, under separate cover to each parent/carer, hand delivered or emailed. When posting, first class post should be used where a warning of legal action is contained within the correspondence.

### **Referral to School Attendance Service for Prosecution**

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

### **Request to hold a Pupil Planning Meeting (PPM)**

In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

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

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

School will be asked to demonstrate how the above has been implemented in the last 9 months prior to a request for a Pupil Planning Meeting, detailing all interventions on the referral form.

Pupil Planning Meetings are held in person at the city's Civic Centre meeting rooms except in exceptional circumstances due to a parent or child's specific needs, requires the meeting to be held virtually or in the family home.

PPM's are chaired by a senior officer and the following persons are invited and expected to attend:

- All parents and carers responsible for the child's attendance at school (this includes parents and carers who the child does not reside with but where they have parental responsibility)
- The pupil (where it is appropriate and safe to do so)
- School senior attendance lead
- Attendance or pastoral staff (either school based or contracted) who have case worked directly with parents
- Linked Local Authority School Attendance Officer
- Relevant services open to the family (such as, social care, SET CAMHS, Supporting Families, Youth Justice etc)

School representees attending the PPM must come with an up-to-date registration certificate and prior knowledge of school's interventions and any new information gained since this request has been made.

After a discussion regarding the actions and engagement of all parties in any attendance related actions and considering any new or continued barriers to attending school, a decision will be made by the senior attendance officer regarding the next steps.

In most cases, a Final Warning letter is issued to all parents and carers responsible for the child/ren's school attendance. In addition to the Final Warning and depending on the details of the discussion, one of four outcomes will be identified:

- Parents agree to engage with a revised/new School Attendance Parent Contract
- Issue a Penalty Notice
- Proceed to magistrates court for prosecution
- Case dismissed and referred back to the school to offer help and support

### **Prosecution**

Following the Pupil Planning Meeting, if there is no improvement in attendance and there is sufficient evidence provided by the school and deemed appropriate, a prosecution under section 444(a) Education Act 1996 will be instigated. The Headteacher will be required to complete the witness statement and certified extract and send to the School Attendance Service to put forward to the Legal Team.

It is important that the school continues to work with the family, conducting first day contact, sending letters, arranging meetings etc. Again, it is vitally important that the School Attendance Service is kept updated of any incidents or changes to family circumstances which could be used as mitigation throughout this period. Just prior to the court hearing the school will be asked for updated information and attendance certificate.

Please note, the courts require an attendance certificate directly from the school system, data shared through the Schools (B2B) system cannot be used in this instance.

## **Court dates and witnesses**

Whilst the Local Authority liaises regularly with the courts and strives to minimise delays between the decision to prosecute and the actual hearing date, schools do need to be aware that the Local Authority has no control over allocated court dates. Court can be weeks or even months in the future before being heard.

It is important that schools understand the potential for any member of school staff who has had contact with the family may be asked to provide an additional witness statement. Should the case go to trial, they will be called to provide evidence in court. The Headteacher is the only member of the school who can provide evidence on the accuracy of the registers as they hold overall responsibility. Therefore, in the event of a trial, they too are likely to be required to attend court. Court dates can also fall within school holidays which is beyond our control.

## **Following court**

Following the court hearing, the school is notified of the outcome. Usually, the case is then closed to the Local Authority (unless open under the traded service) and the school continue to work with the family, generating evidence and re-referring if appropriate. In some circumstances, depending on the sentence received, the Local Authority would still support families. An example would be if the magistrate granted a parenting order.

If there is a conditional discharge placed upon the parent/carer, the school are expected to monitor and keep the School Attendance Service informed should there be further concerns of unauthorised absence as the court would expect a swift return to court should attendance not improve. The school will need to continue to work with the family, sending regular attendance certificates home, and keeping a copy of all letters sent, so that sufficient supporting evidence is generated. The school is required to keep the School Attendance Service updated of a pupil's attendance and the school's involvement, to ensure swift action should attendance not improve.

## **No further role for the School Attendance Service**

For those cases where there is either no role for the School Attendance Service or legal intervention is simply not appropriate, an officer will discuss the case with the school, suggest signposting to other agencies and/or early help services, and possible strategies providing advice before closing the case.

## **Referral for Penalty Notices as an alternative to Court Action**

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 includes a requirement that every local authority must draw up and publish a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices. The issuing of a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 is an alternative to prosecution and enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

It is important to note, if upon receipt of a referral, the School Attendance Service believes the information submitted indicates another course of action may be more appropriate, they will contact the school to discuss further, prior to any action being instigated. This may be particularly relevant where a family is open to social care or other statutory services.

## **Fast Track to Attendance**

The Fast-Track Framework is a time-focused model of best practice which concentrates on early intervention in cases of persistent non-attendance and aims to ensure a faster more effective approach to the implementation of strategies to tackle this behaviour and the underlying causes. Where the parents/carers fail to bring about the necessary improvement, legal proceedings are initiated.

The Aim is:

- To ensure the intervention strategies are put into place early to tackle school attendance problems
- To ensure parents who fail to cooperate or are unwilling to work with the school/LA are identified sooner and action taken to make sure they take responsibility for their child's school attendance

### **Criteria for Fast Track**

The school should have systems in place as part of their attendance data analysis to swiftly identify pupils who meet the criteria for fast track. Where parents identify concerns or barriers to attending school, such as bullying, SEND, parenting or other additional needs requiring support, the fast-track framework would not be appropriate and instead the school should work with the pupil, parent, and carers to provide support, advice, and signposting to services to remove barriers and improve attendance. This can be achieved by holding attendance support meetings and reviewing actions agreed within parent contracts.

The school will invite parents into school for an Attendance Support Meeting, the purpose of this meeting is to make an informal assessment of the situation, identify any barriers preventing the pupil from attending school, and to ascertain if there are any reasons why the Fast-Track process should not be followed.

Where the parent/carers attend the meeting, a school attendance parent contract will be drawn up, attendance actions identified, and the contract signed by parent and school. Where parents fail to attend the meeting, a letter should be sent home, outlining expectations.

A four-week review period will be given for improvements to be made with the review meeting date set at the meeting.

At review meeting (week 4), if no improvements have been made, and no sound reasons of mitigation from the parents or statutory services shared, the school will issue a Final Warning.

A further review of 4 weeks will be given to track improvement from the date of Final Warning. If the non-attendance continues and there is no engagement from the parent, the case can be referred to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer 5 school days after warning has been sent to the parent.

Week 8, where satisfactory improvements are evidenced, no formal action will be taken. School will continue to review and support the family through reviewing the actions in the school attendance parent contract. Case closes to Fast Track.

Where no or insufficient improvements are made, a referral ([Appendix 6](#)) is sent to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer and either a Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority, or the case will be taken through to prosecution.

### **Case meets criteria**

The case meets criteria for referral under Fast Track where:

- the pupil has an attendance rate of 90% or less within the previous 10 weeks from the Final Warning date.
- the pupil has unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more
- the pupil is not 'looked after' by the local authority
- the school has evidence of pre-referral work undertaken by the school, including attendance/pastoral case work with the family, invitation/s to attendance support meetings and where parents have attended, a copy of the school attendance parent contract which evidences non-engagement or compliance by the parent with no outstanding actions for the school or services. Where parents did not attend, written letters of expectations and actions for attending school
- the parent or pupil has not identified any valid reasons or barriers why they cannot attend school on a regular and punctual basis
- there is evidence of a written Final Warning letter sent to all parents and carers.

[Appendix 6](#) Fast Track to Attendance Form should be completed at each stage and if the actions agreed to improve attendance have not been met at week 8 with further unauthorised absences, the referral and all supporting evidence should be submitted to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer.

In summary:

- Week 1 Attendance Support Meeting, agree school attendance parent contract and attendance actions
- Week 4 Attendance Support Review Meeting
  - Actions and expected attendance met, close to Fast Track, monitor and support through usual school systems
  - Actions and expected attendance not met, issue Final Warning, school continue to provide support

- Week 6
  - If the non-attendance continues with 50% attendance or less and there is no engagement from the parent, the case can be referred to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer. (This must be at least 5 school days after the Final Warning has been issued to the parent.)
- Week 8 Review attendance against target since issuing Final Warning
  - Actions and expected attendance met, close to Fast Track, monitor and support through usual school systems
  - Actions and expected attendance not met, school to complete [Appendix 6 – Fast Track to Attendance Legal Intervention Referral Form](#) and provide all supporting evidence

All referrals for legal interventions should be emailed to [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)

## Attendance Panels

Careful consideration is needed before calling an Attendance Panel and issuing a Final Warning letter to ensure the case meets the threshold for issuing a penalty notice and prosecution if unpaid. The school needs to be assured the necessary preventative work has been carried out with the parent/carer and evidence gathered, all of which should be prepared in advance of an attendance panel meeting.

An attendance panel is only appropriate where preventative help and support has been previously offered within the last 9 months and can be evidenced. This must include an attendance support meeting and agreed parent contract or evidence of other relevant meetings and action plans that have outlined the barriers and actions needed to improve attendance.

**Where there are known complexities and parents, carers and pupils need help and support help to remove barriers to attending school, an attendance panel is not appropriate.**

At the Attendance Panel a Final Warning letter will be issued. Where a parent does not attend the meeting, the Final Warning must be sent via first class mail, emailed with a read receipt or hand delivered to all parents/carers with responsibility and day to day care of the pupil. If there is any subsequent unauthorised absence and the Southend Code of Conduct is met, a penalty notice may be requested.

The requirements are:

- The pupil has an attendance rate of 90% or less within the previous 10 weeks
- A copy of the Final Warning letter sent to each parent/carer warning of a referral to the School Attendance Service
- An up-to-date accurate attendance record
- Evidence of previous attempts to support and improve attendance through attendance support meetings and school attendance parent contract within the last 9 calendar months.

Refer to [Appendix 4 - Final Warning Letter](#) and [Appendix 7 - Request to issue a Penalty Notice following the schools Attendance Panel](#)

## Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

Schools must ensure that all literature provided to parents, includes the warning that parents may be issued with a penalty notice if a holiday is taken without permission. If the decision is made not to authorise a parental request, a letter to the parent confirming that a leave of absence has not been authorised must be sent by the Head Teacher and include a warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued.

For unauthorised leave during term time schools can refer into the School Attendance Team to issue a penalty notice where there have been 6 sessions (3 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year.

Refer to [Appendix 8 – Request to issue a Penalty Notice for leave of absence taken in term time](#) for referring to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer  
AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk

### Following Penalty Notice issue

The Local Authority will send out a letter detailing the payment dates of 21 days and 28 days advising the parent/carers of the cost of the notice. The amounts are set by legislation. Currently this is: £60 if paid up to the 21st day and £120 if paid after the 21<sup>st</sup> day and up to the 28th day. Details of how to pay the fine is included in the letter.

### Penalty Notice paid

Once a Penalty Notice is paid, an officer will advise the school and close the case. It is important that the school continues to work with the family and if there remain ongoing attendance concerns, carrying out first day contact, sending letters, arranging attendance support meetings, and reviewing parent contracts etc, to ensure there is sufficient evidence available should a further referral be necessary.

### Penalty Notice not paid

If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid on the 28<sup>th</sup> day, an officer will request an up-to-date evidence pack from the school including any evidence generated both prior to referral and since. It is important that the school continues to work with the family carrying out first day contact, sending letters, arranging meetings etc. If there are ongoing attendance concerns whilst the case is open to the School Attendance Service, the service must be kept fully updated.

It is extremely important that schools immediately inform the School Attendance Service if they become aware of any change in family circumstances, including parent/carer(s) address, following referral. This is particularly vital if parent/carer(s) provide any mitigation, as any change in circumstances may have a bearing on decisions taken.

## Who to Contact

### General enquiries

Schools should contact their named Attendance Officer in the first instance:

Ann Andrews	01702 212502	<a href="mailto:AnnAndrews@southend.gov.uk">AnnAndrews@southend.gov.uk</a>
Debbie Reynolds	01702 212150	<a href="mailto:DebbieReynolds@southend.gov.uk">DebbieReynolds@southend.gov.uk</a>
Hayley Thornton	01702 212103	<a href="mailto:HayleyThornton@southend.gov.uk">HayleyThornton@southend.gov.uk</a>
Jayne Adams	01702 534392	<a href="mailto:JayneAdams@southend.gov.uk">JayneAdams@southend.gov.uk</a>
Kimberley Stevens	07909004034	<a href="mailto:KimberleyStevens@southend.gov.uk">KimberleyStevens@southend.gov.uk</a>
Louise Keeble	01702 215668	<a href="mailto:LouiseKeeble@southend.gov.uk">LouiseKeeble@southend.gov.uk</a>
Marc Howson	01702 534398	<a href="mailto:MarcHowson@southend.gov.uk">MarcHowson@southend.gov.uk</a>
Ronnie Rattner	01702 215789	<a href="mailto:RonnieRattner@southend.gov.uk">RonnieRattner@southend.gov.uk</a>
Emma Crickson	01702 534001	<a href="mailto:EmmaCrickson@southend.gov.uk">EmmaCrickson@southend.gov.uk</a>

### Legal Interventions

For schools wishing to enquire or make referrals for legal interventions such as penalty notices or prosecution, please contact the legal interventions School Attendance Officer on [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)

For any other enquiries or to raise a concern or complaint, please contact:

### School Attendance Team Leader

Jacqui Lipyeat      01702 212336      [JacquiLipyeat@southend.gov.uk](mailto:JacquiLipyeat@southend.gov.uk)

### Head of Access and Inclusion

Cathy Braun      01702 215066      [CathyBraun@southend.gov.uk](mailto:CathyBraun@southend.gov.uk)

## Links

### Statutory Guidance

- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE statutory guidance May 2022](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures: DfE Statutory guidance January 2015](#)
- [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility: DfE Guidance September 2018](#)
- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE guidance for schools February 2023](#)
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE effective practice examples for schools \(and parents\) February 2023](#)
- [Increasing attendance with parent messages, DfE supportive 'how-to' guide for schools](#)

### Southend Guidance and Traded Offer

- [School Attendance Service | Southend Learning Network](#)
- [Southend Code of Conduct](#)
- Southend [SEND Graduated Response, Guidance and Protocols](#)
- [Virtual Schools Attendance and Persistent Absence Policy](#)
- [AV1 unit hire](#)

### Legal or Independent Advice for Parents

- [Child Law Advice](#)
- [Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice & Support Service](#)
- [Southend SEND Local Offer](#)

## Appendix 1 – School attendance codes

The following codes are used by schools when taking registers, further details are available in the Department for Education’s School Attendance advice:

Code	Reason
<b>Present at School</b>	
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
<b>Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity</b>	
The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school (not a parent/carer)	
B	Approved educational activity as pupil being educated off site (not dual registration). Education must be supervised by a suitable education professional (not the parent/carer) and measures are in place to ensure safeguarding.
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - not counted in possible Attendance
J	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending interview with prospective employer or another educational establishment
P	Approved education activity as pupil is participating in an approved supervised sporting activity
V	Approved educational activity as pupil is at an organised educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
<b>Authorised Absence from School</b>	
C	Authorised absence authorised by the school for reasons not covered by any other authorised absence code, this code should only be used in exceptional circumstances
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, but still on the admission register, with no alternative provision made
H	Authorised absence due to authorised family holiday
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical / dental appointments where a <b>whole</b> session is missed. Where a pupil has an appointment and arrives late during a session, they should be marked as late (L if authorised and U if unauthorised)

R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence

#### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed session/s for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, has not authorised the absence and it is not covered by any other code / description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registration closed

#### **Registration Marks Not Counted in Possible Attendance Statistics**

X	Non-compulsory school age absence in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

## Appendix 2 - Targeting Support Attendance Meeting

All schools have responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff.

School Attendance Officer to complete the below in collaboration with the senior school attendance lead

School:	
Date of meeting:	
Meeting held with:	
Whole School Attendance to date:	
Whole School PA to date:	
Number of school Attendance Panels held by school	
Number of Attendance Support meetings held to date:	
Number of school interventions (including prevent and challenge - traded service) cases open	
Number of statutory intervention cases open	
What are the highest codes used this month?	
What are the general reasons for this?	
General discussion as to what school are doing to tackle absence	
Specific Vulnerable students with medical conditions, SEND or open to social care and at risk of low attendance.	
School Attendance Officer Agreed Actions	

School attendance leads and School Attendance Officers to pre-populate in advance of the meeting with any individual students they wish to raise during the meeting

Name of any students School or Attendance Officer have identified from the termly 30% absence return for further discussion	What is Schools Concern	Your advice/ action	Attendance %

# School Attendance Parent Contract



**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Pupil Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year Group:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Number of sessions missed to date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of minutes late to date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Current Attendance:**     % **Authorised Absence:**     % **Unauthorised Absence:**     %  
**Parents Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parents Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address (if different):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

<b>What are the challenges, and barriers to attending school?</b>			
<b>Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for Parents</b>	<b>Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Have Actions been met by the</b>

			<b>Review date Yes/No</b>
To ensure you child attends school every day and on time		Every day	
You must contact the school either before or at the start of each day your child going to be absent from school. Medical evidence may be required for further absences due to illness to be authorised	Contact received from parent/carer in person, via the absence telephone line/app/or text messaging service [delete as necessary] Sight of the Antibiotics – Appointment Card stamped with GP details – Appointment Letters – Doctors Certificate – Any relevant information from GP, Medical professional, or Chemist	Any time Your child is off due to illness	

<b>Desired Outcomes and Attendance Actions for Student</b>	<b>Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No</b>
To attend school every day on time		Every day	

<b>Desired Outcomes and Actions for School</b>	<b>Additional Information as to how the actions will be implemented</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Have Actions been met by the Review date Yes/No</b>
First Day Contact on days child is absent	To discuss with parent any concerns or worries the parent, child or school have throughout the review period and after	On going	

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

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

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

**Parent’s consent to information sharing**

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

**SIGNED BY:**

**PRINT NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

Chair	.....	.....
Parent (1)	.....	.....
Parent (2)	.....	.....
School Representative	.....	.....
Other Representative	.....	.....
Student (if appropriate)	.....	.....

# School Attendance Parent Contract - Review

**Date of Review Meeting:**

**Possible number of sessions since Parent Contract Date:**

**Actual Number of sessions attended:**

**Number of lates:**

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

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

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

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

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

**Parent’s consent to information sharing**

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

**SIGNED BY:**

**PRINT NAME**

**SIGNATURE**

Chair	.....	.....
Parent (1)	.....	.....
Parent (2)	.....	.....
School Representative	.....	.....
Other Representative	.....	.....
Student (if appropriate)	.....	.....

## Appendix 4 - Final Warning Letter

Dear (Parent/Carer)

### **Penalty Notice Warning Letter - The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23(1)**

This is to inform you that your child, [child's name], [DOB], a registered pupil at [.....] School is not in regular attendance at school.

Plan agreed at the Attendance Panel / Fast Track Attendance Support meeting:

- 
- 

If your child has a further unauthorised absence in the next 10 school weeks the local authority will, without further reference to you consider issuing a penalty notice to each parent.

The Penalty Notice is £60 for each child identified in this letter, to be paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120 per child. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Access and Inclusion School Attendance Team will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Please contact me by [date] to discuss if there are any exceptional circumstances that you feel should be taken into consideration before referring the case to the Local Authority for the issue of Penalty Notices.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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

	To be completed by head teacher	Tick when checked (team leader)
Name of child		
Date of birth		
Name of parent/s to be invited to PPM		
Date of birth		
Address		
Address of parent if different		
Other agencies working with the Child/Family: Social Care, Supporting Families, SET CAMHS etc		

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

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

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

In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

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

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

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

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

**School representees attending the PPM must come with prior knowledge of school's interventions and any new information gained since this request has been made.**

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

Head Teacher Signature	
School	
Date	
Print Name	

Return to [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)

## Appendix 6 – Fast Track to Attendance Legal Intervention Referral Form

To be completed by school and sent to [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)

Name of child	
Date of birth	
Name of parent/s invited to the Meeting	
Date of birth of parent/s	
Address of child	
Address of parent if different	
Other agencies working with the Child/Family: Social Care, Supporting Families, CAMHS etc	

### Criteria for Fast Track

The pupil being considered for Fast Track should

- have an attendance rate of 90% or less within the previous 10 school weeks from the Final Warning date.
- have unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more.
- is not 'looked after' by the local authority
- school has evidence of pre-referral work undertaken by the school
- where the parent(s) carer(s) attended the attendance support meeting, a parent contract was agreed
- the parent or pupil has not identified any valid reasons or barriers why they cannot attend school on a regular and punctual basis

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

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

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

<p><b>Week 1</b></p> <p>Attendance Support Meeting. Please complete a parenting contract and agree actions to support improved attendance and punctuality.</p> <p>Where parents fail to attend the meeting, a letter should be sent home, outlining expectations and attendance actions.</p> <p>A four-week review period will be given for improvements to be made with the review meeting date set at the meeting</p>	<b>Date of meeting</b>				
	<b>Did parent(s) attend Yes / No</b>				
	<b>Current Attendance %</b>				
	<b>Current Unauthorised %</b>				
	<b>What are the identified barriers to attending school</b>				
<b>Attendance contract actions</b>					
<p><b>Week 4</b></p> <p><b>Review Attendance Support Meeting</b></p> <p>If no improvements &amp; no mitigation, a Final Warning should be issued immediately</p>	<b>Date of meeting</b>				
	<b>Did parent(s) attend Yes / No</b>				
	<b>Attendance during review period %</b>	<b>Possible sessions</b>	<b>Sessions attended</b>		
	<b>Number of unauthorised sessions during Review period</b>				
	<b>Attendance Actions</b>	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	
	<b>Date of Final Warning</b>				
<p><b>Week 6</b></p> <p>If the non-attendance continues with 50% attendance or less and there is no engagement from the parent, the case can be referred to the School Attendance Legal Intervention Officer.</p> <p>Action - Penalty Notice / Prosecution to be agreed by Team Leader</p>	<b>Attendance % over the past 6 weeks</b>				
	<b>Any new reasons for absence (please list)</b>				
<p><b>Week 8</b></p> <p><b>School Review</b></p> <p>Satisfactory improvements - no formal action. School continues to review and support the family. Case closes to Fast Track.</p>	<b>Date of review</b>				
	<b>Has attendance improved following the agreed actions? Yes/No</b>				
	<b>Overall Attendance %</b>				

Insufficient improvements after all actions are met- referred to Local Authority	<b>Overall Unauthorised %</b>	
	<b>Date referral completed by school</b>	
	<b>Date referral sent to the Attendance legal intervention email box</b>	

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

	<b>Copy attached (✓)</b>	<b>Outcome from communications</b>
Number of Letters sent to parents		
Number of Home visits conducted		
Number of phone calls made		
Other interventions (please detail)		

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

Signed by (Headteacher)..... School ..... Date .....

## Appendix 7 - Request to issue a Penalty Notice following the schools Attendance Panel

	To be completed by head teacher	Tick when checked
Name of child		
Date of birth		
Name of parent/s to be named on the Notice		
Date of birth		
Address		
Address of parent if different		
Other agencies working with the Child/Family: Social Care, Supporting Families, SET CAMHS etc		

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

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

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

In the first instance, all schools are expected to:

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

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

To be completed by head teacher	Number and details of interventions	Tick when checked
1. Summary of any additional needs, identified barriers to attending school and support provided by the school to address attendance concerns, during the 6 months prior to holding an attendance panel		
2. Date of the Attendance Support meeting held by school and <b>Actions agreed</b> . Parenting Contract enclosed (or alternative plan)		
3. Date/s Attendance Panel took place following unauthorised absence of 10 school sessions or more within a 10-week period prior to panel meeting.		
4. Did the Parent /carer attend (Yes/No)		
5. Did the parent/Carer/Pupil identify any new barriers to attending school or request support? (Please detail)		
6. Registration Certificate attached detailing current attendance		
7. Copy of warning letter issued by head teacher (attached)		
8. Confirmation that all school policies are up to date with the new guidance in the Southend code of conduct and this has been shared with parents		

**Please note, where additional needs; other barriers to attending school; or requests for support are identified at an attendance panel, it is not appropriate to issue a final warning and instead the school should review the attendance support action plan/parent contract and follow an alternative route for improving attendance.**

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the above information is accurate, the school has provided every opportunity for support to improve pupil attendance and there are no mitigating circumstances

surrounding any unauthorised absence. As such, I request the School Attendance Team issue a Penalty Notice to the parent/s of the above child in accordance with the guidelines issued in the Southend code of conduct. Should the penalty notice not be paid, the school must provide evidence of all interventions identified above to be included as evidence for referral to magistrate's court.

Head Teacher Signature	
School	
Date	
Print Name	

Return to [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)

## Appendix 8 – Request to issue a Penalty Notice for leave of absence taken in term time

All the below sections must be completed and returned to

[AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk) for the legal interventions officer to process the request. (The request will be returned if not fully completed)

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

	To be completed by head teacher	Tick when checked
Name of child		
Date of birth		
Name of parent/s to be named on the Notice		
Date of birth		
Address		
Address of parent if different		

Dates of leave (6 sessions (3 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence due to leave taken during an academic year)		
Date child returned to school		

Copy of leave request from parent (attached)		
--	--	--

Copy of warning letter issued by head teacher (attached)		
--	--	--

Confirmation that all school policies are up to date with the new guidance in the <u>Southend code of conduct</u> and this has been shared with parents		
---	--	--

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

Head Teacher Signature	
School	
Date	
Print Name	

Return to [AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk](mailto:AttendanceLegalInterventions@southend.gov.uk)