



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The name and contact details of the Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school, is: Emma Wade.

Email address or contact details: admin@leverton.essex.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is: Jenni Johnson (Attendance Officer)

Email address or contact details: attendance@leverton.essex.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more individual support with attendance: Emma Wade (Attendance Champion)

Email address or contact details: admin@leverton.essex.sch.uk

The name of our linked Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance is: Corrie Leech

Ratified by the Governing Body: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

Introduction and Background

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

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

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

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called “Working together to improve school attendance”, most recently updated in July 2026, and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances or another reason for absence permitted by law, and it is the headteacher/principal, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

Promoting Regular Attendance

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

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

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

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department for Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters;
- Promote the benefits of high attendance;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow up absence as required by law;
- Celebrate attendance by reporting whole class achievements;

- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress;
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance or where there are emerging concerns about attendance, punctuality or patterns of absence;
- Monitor attendance regularly, including attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils, in order to identify emerging patterns and barriers to attendance at an early stage.

We celebrate and recognise good and improving attendance. Pupils with consistently strong attendance may become **Attendance Ambassadors** and take on a positive role within school. Individual pupils may also receive praise or certificates for good or improved attendance. Recognition is always considered sensitively, and pupils whose attendance is affected by illness or other circumstances should not be made to feel disadvantaged or embarrassed.

Understanding Types of Absence

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

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

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence for illness absences. In most cases, a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be accepted as sufficient information. Where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of an illness, or where a pupil has prolonged or repeated patterns of illness and further information is needed to understand their health needs or support their attendance, the school may request reasonable medical evidence. The school will not be rigid about the form of evidence requested and will discuss with the family what evidence may be available.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings, where the relevant national threshold and local requirements are met and appropriate support has been provided.

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

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, for example because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;

- holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends;
 - day trips;
 - other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.
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Persistent Absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA)

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

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

The school will not wait until a pupil becomes persistently or severely absent before taking action. Attendance is monitored regularly so that emerging patterns of absence, declining attendance or persistent lateness can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

Absence Procedures

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

Name: Jenni Johnson

Email address or contact details: attendance@leverton.essex.sch.uk

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

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

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.15am;
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call, a message can be left on the school App or you may call into school personally and speak to the office staff. Please be aware that, if you leave a voicemail message or App message to report your child's absence, you may still receive a call from the school so that we may discuss the absence before making a decision as to whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised;
- If the absence continues the school may contact you for an update;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and, where appropriate, you provide reasonable medical evidence if requested to support the absence. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for illness absence and will only request reasonable evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the illness or where further information is needed to understand prolonged or repeated illness and support the pupil appropriately.

When determining whether a child is too ill to attend school, both parents and school staff can consider the advice contained within the NHS and Essex County Council Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness (Appendix D).

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit welfare check may be made, in the interests of safeguarding;

- Where absence remains unexplained or there are safeguarding concerns, the school will follow appropriate safeguarding, attendance and Children Missing Education procedures and will make a referral to the Local Authority where appropriate. A child will not automatically be considered to be “missing from education” simply because they have been absent for a specified number of days. Children Missing Education refers to children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child’s attendance is below 95% and causing concern and/or where punctuality is a concern;
- Arrange a meeting so that you may discuss the situation with our Attendance team;
- Create a personalised action/support plan, such as an attendance contract, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person’s role in improving the attendance patterns of your child;
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;
- Where appropriate, formalise support through an attendance contract or other agreed plan;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant legal sanctions, if attendance does not improve following appropriate support, or where parents fail to engage with support, and where the relevant legal threshold and Essex requirements are met.

Lateness

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

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

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Leverton Primary School are:

Gates open: 8.30am and will close at 8.55am

School starts: 8.45am

Registration starts: 8.45am

Registration taken: 9.00am

Registration closes: 9.15am

End of the school day: 3.15pm

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.45am when children can begin to come into school;
- Registers are taken at 8.45am;
- Children arriving after 8.55am are required to come into school via the school office. If accompanied by a parent/carers they must sign them into our ‘Late Book’ and provide a reason for their lateness. Children arriving after 8.55am but before the registers close will receive a late mark ‘L’;
- At 9.15am the registers will be closed. Pupils arriving after this time will normally receive a ‘U’ code, which records the pupil as being on site but counts as an unauthorised absence for the session. Where there is a valid or unavoidable reason for the late arrival, the appropriate attendance code will be used in accordance with DfE guidance.
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns;

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings where the relevant threshold and requirements are met.

If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with a member of the attendance team, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time.

We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can draw upon outside agencies to help support this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s where appropriate.

Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individual support plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. These may also include pupils experiencing mental health difficulties, children in need, looked-after and previously looked-after children, young carers and pupils experiencing other significant family or social circumstances.

High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils; however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced.

We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners, where appropriate.

Where a pupil has a disability or special educational need, the school will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and relevant SEND guidance when supporting attendance.

Under the DfE's statutory guidance, schools are required to submit a sickness return to the Local Authority for pupils who meet the relevant sickness return criteria, including pupils who have missed or are likely to miss 15 or more school days due to sickness.

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

Name: Emma Wade

Email address or contact details: admin@leverton.essex.sch.uk

Local Authority attendance support services

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

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns.

Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority.

Essex County Council expects schools to follow a support-first approach. This means that schools should understand the barriers to attendance, listen to pupils and families, facilitate appropriate support and formalise support where necessary before considering legal intervention. Legal intervention is a last resort and should only be considered where appropriate support has been provided and has not resulted in improved attendance, or where parents have failed to engage with the support available.

If attendance does not improve, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority for legal intervention in line with the National Framework and Essex County Council's Code of Conduct.

School Attendance and the Law

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

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

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

National Framework for Penalty Notices

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

The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of the relevant types of unauthorised absence. In Essex, the national threshold is based on sessions recorded using the O, U and/or G codes. Essex County Council will not issue penalty notices where N codes are included within the 10 sessions being relied upon to meet the threshold.

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

Meeting the national threshold does not mean that a penalty notice will automatically be issued. The school and Local Authority will consider the individual circumstances, the reasons for absence, whether support has been appropriate and provided, and whether legal intervention is likely to improve attendance.

Where appropriate, and in line with the Essex support-first approach, a Notice to Improve may be issued as a final opportunity for a parent to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a formal communication to parents/carers which provides a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance.

A Notice to Improve will normally be considered where:

- the national threshold for legal intervention has been met;
- support is appropriate but has not resulted in sufficient improvement; and
- the parent/carer has not engaged sufficiently with the support available.

A Notice to Improve is not required where support is not appropriate in the circumstances. The school and Local Authority will consider each case individually.

The Notice to Improve will explain what improvement is expected and the timescale for improvement. Essex County Council guidance provides for a period of six school weeks for parents/carers to improve attendance, although the circumstances of individual cases will be considered.

If attendance does not improve sufficiently, the school may request a penalty notice or other legal intervention from the Local Authority, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct.

Penalty Notice Amounts

Sanctions may include issuing each parent for each child with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for a first penalty notice.

A second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160, payable within 28 days, with no reduction for early payment.

If a third offence occurs within the relevant three-year period, a further penalty notice will not be issued.

The Local Authority may consider other legal action, including prosecution through the Magistrates' Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance and a parent is found guilty, the court can impose a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to three months' imprisonment.

Legal intervention is not automatic and will be considered in accordance with the National Framework and Essex County Council's Code of Conduct. The Local Authority will consider whether sufficient support has been provided and whether legal intervention is appropriate in the circumstances.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or for other leisure or recreational purposes.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to up to ten days of term-time holiday.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance.

Only the headteacher or his/her designate may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school.

The school will usually consider that the parent who has made the application is therefore allowing the leave, and also that all parents who are on the holiday are allowing the leave.

Where a parent removes a child after their application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the relevant national threshold is met, it is likely that a penalty notice will be requested from the Local Authority, in line with the National Framework and Essex Code of Conduct, in respect of each parent believed to have allowed the absence.

At Leverton Primary School, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as: being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher).

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time, regardless of who has planned or paid for the holiday or absence, including grandparents or other family or friends.

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

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

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Leverton Primary School, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form which can be obtained from the school office.

This provides school with the following information:

- Child's name;
- class;
- current address;
- date of leaving;
- new home address;
- name of new school;
- address of new school.

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and may appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

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

Under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, schools are legally required to notify their Local Authority of relevant additions to and deletions from the admission register within the required timescales.

Every deletion from the school register must be notified to the Local Authority as soon as the ground for deletion has been met and in accordance with the statutory requirements.

This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence Data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve, and schools are required to submit pupil attendance data to the Department for Education in accordance with statutory requirements.

Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence affects attainment.

Attendance data is regularly analysed to identify:

- pupils whose attendance is declining;
- pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so;
- patterns of absence or lateness;
- attendance across year groups and cohorts;
- pupils with SEND;
- disadvantaged pupils;
- pupils with medical or health needs;
- young carers;
- pupils with safeguarding or other vulnerabilities; and
- other groups where attendance may be a concern.

We use this information to identify barriers, target support and evaluate whether interventions are improving attendance.

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

Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

Regular attendance is an important safeguarding measure.

The school will follow its safeguarding procedures where a pupil's absence raises concerns about their welfare or safety.

Where a pupil is absent without explanation, the school will make reasonable and proportionate attempts to contact the family and will use emergency contacts and welfare checks where appropriate.

Where there are concerns that a child may be missing from education, the school will follow the relevant Local Authority Children Missing Education procedures.

A child is considered to be a child missing education where they are of compulsory school age, are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

A period of absence from school does not automatically mean that a child is a child missing education.

Remote Education

Remote education will not normally be used as a substitute for attending school.

Where appropriate, remote education may be considered as part of a temporary and individualised approach to supporting a pupil who is unable to attend school, including as part of a reintegration plan.

The school will continue to work towards the pupil returning to regular attendance wherever this is appropriate and in the pupil's best interests.

Attendance Support and Legal Intervention

Leverton Primary School is committed to a support-first approach.

Where attendance is a concern, we will seek to understand the reasons for absence and work with the pupil and family to identify and address barriers.

Support may include:

- meetings with parents/carers;
- meetings with the pupil;
- attendance monitoring;
- an attendance action plan;
- an attendance contract;
- support from school staff;
- reasonable adjustments;
- support for SEND or medical needs;
- support for emotional wellbeing or mental health;
- signposting or referrals to external agencies;
- support from the Local Authority; and
- a Team Around the Family approach where appropriate.

Where informal support has not worked, or where parents have not engaged with support, the school may move to more formal approaches.

Legal intervention will only be considered where appropriate support has been provided and documented, or where support is not appropriate, and where the relevant national and local requirements are met.

Essex County Council requires schools to provide evidence of the support offered before a request for legal intervention is considered. This may include correspondence with parents, attendance call logs, meeting notes, attendance contracts, referrals, Notices to Improve and attendance records.

Local Authority Legal Intervention

Where appropriate, the school may refer attendance concerns to the Local Authority for consideration of legal intervention.

Essex County Council's Attendance Compliance Team will only consider legal action where the school can demonstrate that extensive support has been offered and either:

- the support has not resulted in improved attendance; or
- parents have failed to engage with the support available and attendance remains a concern.

The national threshold for legal intervention is 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period, using the relevant attendance codes. In Essex, the sessions relied upon for the threshold must be coded O, U and/or G.

The school will consider carefully whether legal intervention is likely to result in improved attendance before making a referral.

Attendance Responsibilities

Attendance is the responsibility of everyone in our school community.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- provide strategic leadership for attendance;
- monitor attendance and punctuality;
- analyse attendance data and identify emerging concerns;
- ensure appropriate support is offered to pupils and families;
- oversee attendance interventions;
- liaise with the Local Authority and other agencies;
- ensure that legal intervention is only considered where appropriate; and
- report attendance information to governors.

The Attendance Officer will:

- monitor daily attendance;
- follow up unexplained absence;
- maintain accurate attendance records;
- communicate with parents/carers;
- support attendance monitoring and interventions;
- maintain appropriate records and evidence; and
- liaise with the Senior Attendance Champion regarding concerns.

All school staff will:

- promote positive attendance;
- build strong relationships with pupils;
- welcome pupils back following absence;
- identify concerns about attendance or punctuality;
- communicate concerns appropriately; and
- support pupils to engage successfully in school.

Parents/carers will:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time;
- notify school promptly when their child is absent;
- provide appropriate information regarding the reason for absence;
- work with the school when attendance concerns arise;
- engage with support offered by the school or Local Authority; and
- ensure that any request for leave of absence is made in advance.

Governors will:

- monitor attendance;
- receive regular attendance information;
- understand attendance patterns and groups at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- challenge and support school leaders regarding attendance; and
- ensure that attendance remains a strategic priority for the school.

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, legislation or Local Authority requirements.

The school will ensure that its attendance procedures remain aligned with the latest DfE statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Children Missing Education statutory guidance and relevant Essex County Council attendance procedures.

Ratified by the Governing Body: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

Relevant Guidance and Legislation

This policy should be read alongside the following:

- Department for Education – Working together to improve school attendance, July 2026;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Education Act 1996;
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended;
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024;
- Department for Education – Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2026;
- Department for Education – Children Missing Education, September 2025;
- Department for Education – Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions;
- Department for Education – Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school;
- Essex County Council – Attendance Support First Toolkit;
- Essex County Council – Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and Legal Intervention.

Appendix A – NHS and Essex Guidance on School Absence and Childhood Illness

Parents and school staff should refer to current NHS and Essex County Council guidance when considering whether illness means that a child is unable to attend school.

The school will consider the individual circumstances of the pupil when recording illness absence and will work with families where illness is prolonged or recurring.

Medical evidence will not routinely be required. Where reasonable evidence is needed, the school will discuss with the family what evidence is available and will not insist on a particular form of evidence where other appropriate evidence is available.

Appendix B – Essex County Council Attendance and Legal Intervention

The school will follow the current Essex County Council procedures and Code of Conduct when considering any request for a penalty notice or prosecution.

Current Essex guidance should be accessed directly from the Essex County Council Schools and Education website so that the school is always working from the most up-to-date version.

Appendix C – Term-Time Leave

Parents/carers wishing to request leave of absence during term time must complete the school's leave of absence request form in advance.

Requests will be considered individually by the headteacher or designated person in accordance with the statutory requirements.

There is no automatic entitlement to term-time holidays.

Where a request is refused and the pupil is subsequently absent without authorisation, the school may refer the matter to Essex County Council for consideration of a penalty notice where the relevant national threshold and local requirements are met.
