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THE GILBERD SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is: Rebecca Litton rli@gilberd.com

The contact details for the school which parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are: absence@gilberd.com or 01206 842211.

Introduction and Background

The Gilbert School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible. Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of students. The Gilbert School's ethos demonstrates that students feel that their presence in school is essential if they are to achieve their potential, that they are missed when they are absent or late and, that when necessary, appropriate action will be taken to improve attendance.

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

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. 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 DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

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 on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. This is in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education, [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#), which highlights the importance of understanding the impact of children who are missing or absent from education.

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

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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

Promoting Regular Attendance

At the Gilberd 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 connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

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

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Acknowledge and celebrate good or improving attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning

of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility 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/carer), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

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

Approval for term-time absence

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

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

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

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via admin@gilberd.com. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and this should be requested by a resident parent/carer.

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

Unauthorised absence includes (please note this list is indicative, not exhaustive):

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for a 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 at 9.15am 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/carers to medical appointments.
- a birthday including their own.
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional circumstances' by the Headteacher - may result in school applying to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the Local Authority.
- day trips.
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2024. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and **they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.**

It is a rule of The Gilberd School that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or his/her designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing, in advance, on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent/carer removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the issue of a Penalty Notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, however, due to the importance of pupils settling into school at the commencement of the school year, Penalty Notices may also be issued if there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence during the first two calendar weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

At The Gilberd School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as (please note this will always be at the discretion of the Headteacher):

... 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.

We will not consider applications for leave during term time:

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.
- during assessment and test periods in the school's calendar affecting your child.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

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

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.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the Local Authority, where relevant.

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section relating to sanctions).

Absence Procedures (See also annex C)

The contact details for the school which parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are: absence@gilberd.com or 01206 842211 (please leave a message on the absence line).

Please state your child's name, tutor group and a reason for their absence.

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

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8.30am.
- **Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8.30am.**
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.

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/carers by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding.
- A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents/carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education".

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern.
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Education Welfare Officer and the appropriate year team.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance.
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. 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, miss vital work and important messages.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.40am when students are expected to be in the tutor bases, ready for the register to be taken shortly after.
- Children arriving after 8.40am are required to come into school via the green gates – 'late gate' and after 8.50am they will need to sign in at student reception.
- Morning registration will open for completion during the standards check at 8.50am and will formally close at 9.15am. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - 'U', but this will **not** count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence (unless the parent/carer contacts us with a valid reason

e.g. medical appointment which will be marked appropriately). Should the guidance on this be updated throughout the year, our policy will be updated to reflect this.

- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness.

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. We expect parents/carers and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our students.

School Attendance and the Law (See Annex B for further guidance)

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents/carers 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.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent/carer may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent/carer is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

If a parent/carer has previously received a Penalty Notice for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance or been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance, there may not be an opportunity to pay a further Penalty Notice; the case may proceed directly to court.

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Follow the link to see the Essex Road Map for schools and other professionals: [Essex Attendance Roadmap \(PDF, 522KB\)](#)

Please be aware that ensuring your child's attendance to both school and all lessons is also covered in The Gilbert School Student Code of Conduct; please follow this link [Student-Code-of-Conduct-Policy-2025-v2.pdf](#)

Sanctions

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

Penalty Notices (See Annex B for further guidance)

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), Local Authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a Penalty Notice.

If the school issues a Penalty Notice, it will check with the Local Authority before doing so and send it a copy of any Penalty Notice issued.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

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

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

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

If issued with a **first** Penalty Notice, the parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

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

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

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These Penalty Notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

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

Notices to improve

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

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

They will include:

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

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving The Gilberd School, other than at the end of year 11, parents/carers are required to inform us of the following details: Child's name, tutor group, 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 appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us. The Gilberd School will make contact with the receiving school to ensure the details are correct and that the child has a forwarding school to attend.

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

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

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

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible.

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. August 2024
[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

All pupils

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

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

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

Persistently absent pupils

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

Severely absent pupils

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

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

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

Annex B:

[Essex County Council - Penalty Notices for school absence/suspended pupils from 1 September 2024](#)

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

Annex C :

Attendance Procedures & rationale

Personnel:

Senior attendance lead - Rebecca Litton (DSL)
School Attendance Officer - Justine Musk (JMU)
Year Teams – Head and Assistant Heads of Year
SENCOs: Mr Simon Auton and Miss Lindsay Parker

The DfE guidance follows 6 main strands that require action from the school and the Local Authority. The Gilberd School has a whole school approach which is broken down under these key headings:

- 1. Expect:** regular school attendance - above 95%
This applies specifically to the school's culture and ethos. Looking at how inclusive/adaptive the curriculum/co-curricular offers are. What makes the students want to attend and feel connected. Ensure that attendance to school is seen as a priority by all staff (Year team meetings/safeguarding/curriculum briefings promote this).
- 2. Monitor:** Attendance data is scrutinised by:
The pastoral team, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), the senior team line manager and LABS meetings. The data informs the next steps – there are 5 letters that outline increasing concerns and follow up actions. These are sent to support families/students who may be experiencing barriers to attendance.
- 3. Listen and understand:** These are undertaken by:
The return to school conversation is undertaken by the tutor, the concerns are followed up by the pastoral team and the parents/carers are invited in to meet with school and the EWO.
- 4. Facilitate support:** To specify what is in place to help:
Exploration of barriers to learning at LABS, moving seats, classes, subjects, population, engaging outside agencies, mentoring. Agencies include: ELSA, CAMHS, CHAAT health, Children's Society, Early help Drop in, Evolve, Next Chapter, SEND Ops, Education Access (NEECA), careers advice, 1-2-1 tuition.
- 5. Formalise support:** Absence is persisting; a more supportive but robust approach is needed, which may involve outside agencies/specialist support. Attendance contracts may be drawn up at this point. Be prepared to look at any other support that could be needed, be prepared to change support that is in place.
- 6. Enforce:** All other avenues have been exhausted, but there is no engagement so:
Statutory intervention, a Penalty Notice, or prosecution are imposed to protect the child's right to an education.

Timescale	Action/Personnel	Desired outcome
Annually	Letter from RLI to all parents/carers outlining the need for good attendance to school. Attendance policy is updated.	Parents/carers are aware of their responsibility to ensure regular school attendance.
Termly	Individual student reports outline the attendance figures to parents/carers.	Parents/carers track the levels of attendance each term.
Daily	Absence calls/emails. Office and YO staff	To alert parents/carers to absence procedures.
After all/any period of absence	Form tutor undertakes a 'Return to School' conversation, a supportive well-being check-in with the pupil and logs on CPOMS. Identify patterns of absence – investigate this.	Student is aware that all absences are tracked.
Letter of concern 1: Weekly analysis	YO trigger these after attendance analysis shows patterns of poor attendance	All students and parents/carers are aware that we are monitoring each absence.
Early help and support, following first letter of concern	LABS discussion – identify strategies to support. YO complete 'Let's Talk...We Miss You' paperwork'.	Student attendance starts to improve.
Letter 2: Attendance support meeting	Inviting student and parents/carers in for a declining attendance support meeting.	Issues identified, support in place and attendance improves.
Letter 3: attendance contract letter	Parent/carer meeting arranged. A formal agreement for all parties is made, so all parties know their role in supporting child's attendance.	Parents/carers/school/child adhere to their obligations and attendance improves.
Letter 4: timeline set for improvement	'A notice to improve' is set and monitored within a 6-week timeline	Attendance improves – continue to monitor.
Letter 5: Formal proceedings have been considered appropriate	If no improvement, a legal route is considered as the final course of action, after all supportive measures have failed. All documentation of school's efforts to improve a child's attendance are gathered for the EWO to apply for Penalty Notice or prosecution.	Parents/carers are issued a fine and child's attendance improves. If the case highlights the need for more specialist support and intervention, this will potentially elicit that support as all other processes will have been implemented and exhausted.

Attendance processes:

Absence rate/type	School action
95%+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence message sent daily when applicable. • Return to School (RTS) tutor conversation. • Fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY – if applicable.
91-94% attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence message sent daily when applicable. • RTS tutor conversation, fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY – if applicable. • Letter of concern sent when absence drops below 94%.
80-90% attendance Persistent absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily absence message when applicable. • RTS tutor conversation, fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY, letter 2 meeting invite sent. • HOY/AHOY attend Early help Drop in – record on CPOMS.
51-79% attendance Persistent absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily absence message, year team to make daily absence calls. • RTS tutor conversation. • Fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY. • Parental meetings. • HOY/AHOY attend Early help Drop in – record on CPOMS. • Student meetings. • Timetable adjustments if needed, mentoring. • EWS meetings; letters 1-5 sent with overlapping support. Discussion at LABS to see where support is needed. • ‘Let’s talk...We Miss You’ document completed with parent/carer and child. • Medical referral considered. • Reintegration pathway discussed with targets.
0-50% attendance Severe absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily absence message, year team to make daily absence calls. • Weekly list distributed by RLI to discuss at LABS. • RTS tutor conversation. • Fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY. • Parental meetings. • HOY/AHOY attend Early help Drop in – record on CPOMS. • Student meetings. • Timetable adjustments if needed, mentoring. • GP appointments requested, medical referral considered. • EWS meetings; letters 1-5 sent with overlapping support. • Weekly Home visit by EWS/Year team. • ‘Let’s talk...We Miss You’ document completed with parent/carer and child, findings discussed at LABS, support and referrals made. • Reintegration pathway discussed with targets.
EBSA Emotionally based school avoidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily absence message, year team to make daily absence calls – if applicable. • RTS tutor conversation. • Fortnightly tracking with EWS and HOY/AHOY. • HOY/AHOY attend Early help Drop in – record on CPOMS. • Meetings held with home to discuss barriers. • Timetable adjustments if needed, letters 1-5 sent with overlapping support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELSA practitioners weekly home visits and implement ELSA at home reintegration pathway. 2 weekly review RLI/LPA.• 'Let's talk...We Miss You' document completed with parent/carer and child at home, findings discussed at LABS, support and referrals made.• GP appointments requested, medical referral applied for if medical evidence in place.• 6 weekly reviews held by school and NEECA if medical referral successful.
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