



CSS

Children's
Support
Service

Children's Support Service Attendance Policy

Updated – September 2020

Accepted by the Management Committee – 24 September 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement:

The Children's Support Service engages every student in their academic, social and personal development, enhancing their skills and increasing confidence in themselves and their future.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE and the LAW

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Head teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up

to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Head teacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code).

With effect from 1st October 2017 penalty notices may be issued by Essex County Council in the following circumstances.

If there are 6 or more unauthorised sessions due to a holiday taken during the first two weeks of September.

(relates to absences falling in September 2018 onwards)

The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Head teacher. Where possible, families of schools should look to have a consistent approach to all leave of absence requests – to try to ensure that requests for siblings who attend different schools are met with the same response by each Head teacher who receives a request.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Missing Education Child Employment Service (MECES), who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. This referral will be made after 5 days if no contact is forthcoming from Parents/carers.

COVID 19

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will again be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCEDURES

School

- The SIMS data base is used to record and analyse attendance.
- Each student has a personalised programme and will have different session times according to venue.
- First day contact is initiated within 30 minutes of the student's non-arrival.
- Term time holidays are not authorised.
- Attendance is monitored weekly through LABs, phone calls home, letters, rewards systems linked to attendance, engagement mentor system and school based meetings. Finally, a referral to MECES is made when all other avenues have failed to improve attendance.
- Following periods of absence, a whole staff ethos of welcoming is promoted to ensure best possible chance of reintegration.
- Reintegration team tutors/Administration Staff to record and monitor attendance of students not taught in the centres.

Parents/carers

- Parents are required to inform the centre/reintegration tutor, on each day of absence, should their child be unable to attend, within 30 minutes of the expected arrival time.
- Parents are required to request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, but are informed that holidays will constitute unauthorised absence.
- Parents are encouraged from the initial meeting to work closely with staff at the centre to ensure good progress is made in all areas of life at the centre, including attendance.

Students

- There is an expectation that students attend regularly and are on time for registration and lessons.
- Office staff/Reintegration tutors register students as they arrive.
- Procedure for late arrival – noted on SIMS and parents informed.
- Students are supported with any transport/travel issues which may arise.

Missing Education Child Employment Service (MECES)

- The CSS works with quadrant based Area Attendance Teams to promote good attendance.
- CSS carries out statutory duties on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure parents/carers fulfil their legal requirements in relation to school attendance.
- The school will refer a pupil to MECES where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The MECES will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers.
- A school attendance meeting will be called which will inform the parent(s) of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued, which could lead to prosecution for non-attendance if they fail to pay.
- A warning of penalty notice letter will be sent prior to any request for a penalty notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices

The responsibility for authorising requests for leave of absence lies with the school. **For any 10 absences over a 10 week period, a warning letter of a penalty notice can initially be sent by the school. If there is not improvement, the case can be referred to MECES, and the legal intervention panel that will make the decision on whether to issue a penalty notice based on the evidence supplied by the school.**

Co-ordination between the LA and its local partners

MECES and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct annually.

* All those defined as a parent under Section 576 Education Act 1996 are parents for the purpose of these provisions. This means that all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law. Parent means each and every parent coming within the definition (whether acting jointly or separately) and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to parent in the singular.

As with prosecutions under Section 444 Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

Attendance Targets

It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve attendance targets which are in line with national expectations.

Rewards and Celebrations

High profile rewards and celebrations are held to show that attendance levels are closely monitored and positive attendance patterns are recognised as something to celebrate.

Examples of rewards/celebrations include:

- Personal praise/phone calls home
- Certificates
- Merits
- Celebration Assemblies
- Reward trips
- Lucky dip
- Vouchers

Evaluation and Review

CSS will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the centres and community, and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.