

# SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

*Learning for a Better Tomorrow*

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



**Adopted by Governing Body:** March 2016

**Review Frequency:** Annually

**This Governor Review:** September 2022

**Next Review Date:** September 2023

**Status:** Statutory

Headteacher's signature	Chair of Governor's signature
	<i>M. Thomas</i>

Based on ECC model policy Sept 2022. Adaptations specific to Sunnymede Junior School are in blue font.

## **Introduction and Background**

Sunnymede Junior 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.

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. 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 statement 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, 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.

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 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 are 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, who can authorise the absence.**

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At [Sunnymede Junior 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.

### **The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:**

Name: [Mrs Ronnie Branch](#)

Email address or contact details: [admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk)

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:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance [or cause concern](#)
- [Engage directly with pupils to encourage good attendance \(where appropriate\)](#)
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
- Reward [100%](#) or improving attendance

## **Understanding Types of Absence**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning ([APPENDIX 1](#)). 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 permitting 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 mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like 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 causes.

**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 penalties and/or legal proceedings.

Though not an exhaustive list, unauthorised absence includes:

Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.

- Absences which have never been properly explained or evidenced if requested by the school
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark on the attendance register: Children who arrive at school after the close of registration (9:20am) are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes but it is recorded 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 without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher- may result in the 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

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to resolve this.

If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, we will inform the parent/ carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. Parents and carers of PA pupils may be subject to a school-based meeting and a support plan put in place to secure improved attendance. This may include the allocation of additional support from within school, a request for support from external agencies, or incentive programmes. We may also talk to PA children directly about their attendance, particularly if their parent is reluctant to engage themselves with the school.

### **Absence Procedures**

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

Name: Miss Lauren King, Office Manager

Email: admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk

Tel: 07702798232

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

**If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must adhere to the following procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9:20am. Absence should be recorded online via our Studybugs App (registration via: <https://studybugs.com/about/parents>). The school also has an answer phone available to leave a message but this should be used only if you are unable to use Studybugs. Please do not report on both Studybugs as well as on voicemail.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.20am, unless otherwise agreed with the school office. If we do not receive communication from you, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.

#### **If your child is absent, we:**

- Will telephone you on the first day, 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 contact parents by telephone, we will telephone other emergency contact numbers [you have provided the school; please make sure, therefore, they are up-to-date](#). We may also write letters.
- May make a home visit [if we have been unable to contact you OR if we consider it necessary, for example in the interests of safeguarding](#).
- in the interests of safeguarding
- Make a referral to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be “missing from education.”

#### **If absence continues and attendance continues to deteriorate or fail to improve 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 [Home School Attendance Officer, Headteacher or other senior member of staff](#) if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance. [This may involve direct engagement with pupils to encourage improved 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 from their class teacher.

See **APPENDIX 2** to see how lateness impacts on learning.

## **The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Sunnymede Junior School are:**

Gates open: 8.40 am

Gates close: 8:50am

Registration closes and lessons commence: 8.55 am

End of the school day: 3.15 pm

### **How we manage lateness:**

Learning starts at 8.55 am.

In order to ensure this, the school gates are open between **8:40am** and **8:50am**. Children can arrive between these times and self-register in their classes using our Studybugs online registration system. For those pupils arriving at 8:50 am, this means that they have five minutes to walk to their classroom, hang up coats, deposit lunchboxes and self-register, ready for learning at 8:55am. At 8:50am, the school gates are locked to discourage late attendance and to safeguard our pupils. If your child has not registered by 8:55am, they will receive a late mark (L).

Children arriving after 8:50am are required to come in to school via the school office if accompanied by a parent or carer. The parent/carer will sign them into our electronic 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness, which is timed and recorded. **Please note that if you arrive after 8:50am, access to the school will only be possible via The Meadoway gate.** A child should not arrive to school late unaccompanied. If they do, we may contact you to discuss the reason they were late and unaccompanied.

From time to time, the Home School Attendance Officer will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school **and discuss the reason for lateness with the parent/carer.**

At **9:20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site (Code 'U'), but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence **of one session (half a day).**

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the **Home School Attendance Officer, Headteacher or senior member of staff**, 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 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 use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Home School Attendance Officer or the relevant Local Authority team/s. 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 individualised early help 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. However, high expectations of attendance remain and 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.

See [APPENDIX 3](#) for summary tables of the DfE responsibilities for school attendance.

**The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact for more detailed support on attendance (Attendance Officer/Pastoral Support Worker/Head of Year etc):**

Name: Miss Lauren King

Email address or contact details: [admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@sunnymede-jun.essex.sch.uk)

### **Local Authority Attendance Support Services**

Local Authority Attendance specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families and other professionals 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. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Essex Code of Conduct ([APPENDIX 4](#)), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

### **School Attendance and the Law**

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

**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 2013. 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 the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

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 (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school ([APPENDIX 5](#)). This is also available on our school website or by [clicking here](#). Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, 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 ([equivalent of 5 school days](#)) 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 ~~weeks of September~~ due to a term-time holiday.

**At *Sunnymede Junior 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 the school consider to be ‘rare, significant, unavoidable and short’. By ‘unavoidable’ we mean an event that the school agrees could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, [outside of school hours or 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 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 a leave of absence request is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are, however, advised to read with their children, [prioritise their](#)

times tables and mental maths skills, and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

### **Deletion from Roll**

For any pupil leaving *Sunnymede Junior School*, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Pupils moving from school' form (**APPENDIX 6**) 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 and location of new school and start date, address of new school. It also asks if your intention is to home educate your child. This information is essential to ensure that we know and appropriately safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

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

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now **legally required** to notify their Local Authority of **every new entry** to the admission register **within five days** of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, **every deletion** from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. 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. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking, as increased absence **usually** 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 and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents 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 and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.*

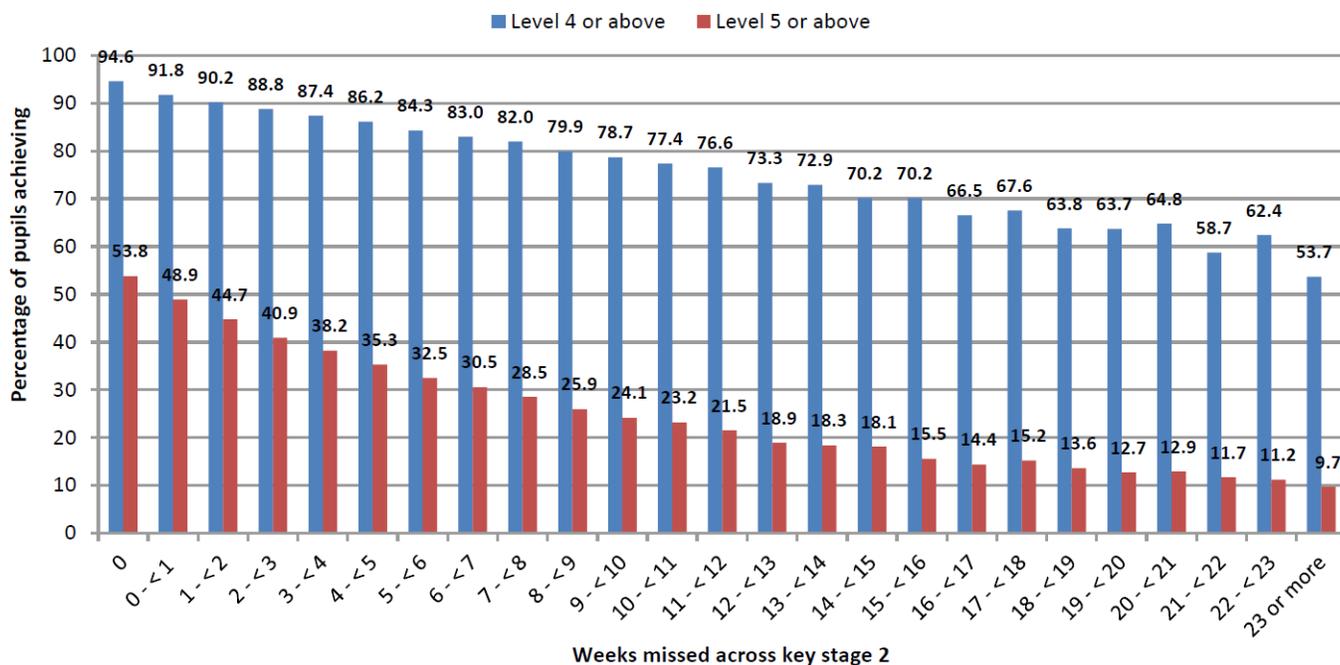
## APPENDIX 1

### IMPACT OF ATTENDANCE ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING

ATTENDANCE %	NUMBER OF DAYS LOST	IMPACT ON YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION
<b>100%</b>	None Outstanding attendance Excellent work - well done!	This gives you the best chance to achieve your potential as 78.7% of pupils with 100% attendance go on to achieve 5+ A* - C GCSEs, including English and Maths.
<b>97% or above</b>	Great Attendance Fewer than 6 days of absence in one academic year. Above the school attendance target - well done!	
<b>95 - 96.9%</b>	Less than 10 days of absence. Your child is more likely to achieve their targets and will be well prepared as they move through the school.	Statistics show that 69.2% of pupils in this attendance bracket go on to achieve 5+ A* - C GCSEs, including English & Maths
<b>92 - 94.9%</b>	Up to 15 days of absence. If your child's attendance is in this category, they will have had up to 3 weeks absence in the school year.	According to statistics, only just over half (52.8%) of pupils in this category go on to achieve 5+ A* - C GCSEs, including English and Maths
<b>90 - 91.9%</b>	Your child will have had up to 19 days of absence (up to 3 weeks and 4 days). Pupils in this category may fall behind and it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.	Attendance in this bracket is a major concern and should be addressed quickly. Only just over half (52.8%) of pupils in this category go on to achieve 5+ A* - C GCSEs, including English and Maths
<b>&lt; 90%</b>	Persistently Absent Your child will have had more than 19 days absence (more than 3 weeks and 4 days) over the academic year. This is unsatisfactory attendance and the Local Attendance Officer/Local Authority may become involved.	Poor attendance - this is extremely worrying. Of those pupils with below 90% attendance, only 35.6% are likely to go on to achieve 5 A* - C GCSEs, including English and Maths.

## DfE “The link between absence and attainment at KS2 - 2013/14 academic year”

The analysis of the link between overall absence and attainment when taking prior attainment and pupil characteristics into account showed that, for each KS2 and KS4 measure, overall absence had a statistically significant negative link to attainment – i.e. every extra day missed was associated with a lower attainment outcome.





## The Impact of Lateness on Attendance



When your child arrives late for school, even by a few minutes, they miss the teacher's instructions and introduction to the learning for the day. As well as disrupting their own learning, they disrupt the learning of others. It can also be very embarrassing for your child to arrive late.

Minutes later per day	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year	Which means this number of lessons missed
<b>5 minutes</b>	3.5 days	17 lessons
<b>10 minutes</b>	7 days	35 lessons
<b>15 minutes</b>	10.5 days	52 lessons
<b>20 minutes</b>	14 days	70 lessons
<b>30 minutes</b>	21 days	104 lessons

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

**Ensure your child arrives at the school gate between 8:40 am and 8:50am.**

**Prepare packed lunch, school bags, uniform the night before.**

**Make sure an alarm clock is set the night before, giving enough time to get ready and carry out your journey.**

**Remember, while we encourage pupils' independence, it remains the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is at school on time every day.**

## LEARNING HOURS LOST THROUGH POOR ATTENDANCE

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

**Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance. Sept 2022**

**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>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>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 poor attendance.</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.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act 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 termly 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, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where 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>Continued 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 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>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting 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>Continued 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>Continued 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 pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

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

## Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>

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

The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area to all Essex residents.

The Government requires Local Authorities to issue a code of conduct and any persons issuing Penalty Notices to a parent<sup>1</sup> must do so in accordance with this protocol. Essex County Council is legislatively responsible for administering the Penalty Notice scheme and will do so in accordance with a number of legislative and non-legislative requirements.

The Essex code has been agreed following consultation with;

- Essex County Council representatives – Attendance Compliance Team and Essex Legal Services.
- Representatives from Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Essex Schools
- Essex Police
- Persons accredited under Essex Police’s Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS)

The Code of Conduct is in accordance with the following legislation;

**LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES**

The legal framework governing school attendance and the responsibilities of parents of excluded pupils, schools and the LA is set out in a succession of acts, regulations and other guidance.

**Education Act 1996**

Under Section 7 of the Act: the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child’s age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs that the child may have, this can be by regular attendance at school, or otherwise (the parent can choose to educate their child themselves). If it appears to the LA that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise then they must begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend the school regularly the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. In addition, if it can be proved that a parent knew of the child’s non-attendance and failed to act, then they may be found guilty under Section 444(1 A). This offence (known as the higher or aggravated offence) can lead to a warrant being issued compelling a parent to attend court and conviction may result in a higher level fine and/or a custodial sentence.

On 6 April 2017, in the case of *Isle of Wight Council v Platt* [2017] UKSC 28, the Supreme Court ruled that the word ‘regularly’ means ‘in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.’

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents>

The Act added two new sections (444A and 444B) to the Education Act. It introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444; the issuing of penalty notices is governed by:

- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/contents/made>

## [Children Act 1989](#)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/36>

## [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/16>

## [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

## [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(Amended 2013\)](#)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/regulation/2/made>

### **AUTHORISATION TO ISSUE PENALTY NOTICES**

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority (LA). It has been agreed that the Attendance Compliance Team, on behalf of Essex LA, will usually issue penalty notices. The Service will administer the scheme from any funds obtained as a result of issuing penalty notices.

Head Teachers (and Deputy Head Teachers and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by the head teacher) and police, and persons accredited by the community safety accreditation scheme are all able to issue the notices under the Act, although there is no requirement for them to do so.

In Essex it has been agreed that the Police and Head Teachers will not issue penalty notices to parents. Persons accredited through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme<sup>2</sup> are authorised to do so.

### **CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED**

Penalty Notices apply to pupils of statutory school age, which commences the term immediately following the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and finishes on the last Friday in June of school year in which they turn 16.

Penalty notices will only be issued as a conclusion to a series of processes and when all attempts to address school attendance matters have been unsuccessful. If a previous Penalty Notice has been unsuccessful, rationale and justification should be provided as to why issuing another Penalty Notice would improve the attendance of the student. If schools are not aware of any previous or current legal interventions they must email [attendancecompliance@essex.gov.uk](mailto:attendancecompliance@essex.gov.uk). A response will be sent within 3 working days. Parents cannot be penalised more than once for the same period of absence.

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<sup>2</sup> Accredited companies at time of this publication are Attendance Solutions Essex, Aquinas School Attendance Provisions and NEMAT Support Services

Domestic and European legislation and case law makes it clear that when serving a formal Notice in criminal proceedings, the recipient must be clearly and unambiguously identified. For the Purpose of issuing a Penalty Notice under this Code, the parent's first and last name must be cited on the Notice and any covering letter. Essex partners have agreed to use Penalty Notices for the following circumstances however the offence under s444 Education Act 1996 is the same whether issued for unauthorised leave of absence (ULA) or irregular school attendance (ISA):

### Penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence (ULA)<sup>3</sup>

Penalty Notices may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday, whereby a parent made an application to the School which the Head Teacher has deemed not for exceptional circumstances. In addition, a Penalty Notice may also be issued, whereby the parent did not submit a leave of absence request, however the school have reason to believe the absence was for the purpose of a holiday and should not be authorised as parent has not provided any additional evidence which the Head Teacher deems appropriate to support the absence.

In addition to the above criteria, 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 weeks of September due to a term-time holiday.

The Local Authority requests that for Penalty Notices to be issued, parents must be duly warned of the legal ramifications under separate cover if they remove their child from school for the purpose of a holiday. Schools/Academies must reference the use of Penalty Notices within their Attendance Policy which must be available to all parents/carers online and/or in hard copy within the school, accessible to parents to read. Schools should remind parents of the protocol regarding leave of absence during term time.

### Penalty Notices for Irregular School Attendance (ISA)

Penalty Notices may be issued where there has been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous 10 school weeks.

Parents must have been issued with a Legal Action Warning Letter with accompanying Legal fact sheet 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 18 calendar weeks.

The Local Authority advises that the following template is used for irregular school attendance referrals as this has been specifically designed to enable the progression of cases if appropriate. This letter must be on headed paper from the school or accredited persons issuing the notice. The legal fact sheet must be included

[https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Attendance\\_Compliance/Documents/Legal%20Action%20Warning%20Letter%20for%20schools.docx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Attendance_Compliance/Documents/Legal%20Action%20Warning%20Letter%20for%20schools.docx) .

Failure to adequately issue warning to parents may result in the Penalty Notice being withdrawn or not issued.

All penalty notice referrals or notifications from Accredited Persons must be sent via Essex County Council's online portal and all relevant pre-referral work in accordance with the Local Authority requirements must be uploaded alongside the referral/notification.

The Local Authority must be satisfied that the substantive offence in accordance with s.444 Education Act 1996 has been committed prior to issuing a Penalty Notice.

Evidence of attempts to address attendance concerns within the previous 8 weeks prior to requesting or notifying of a Penalty Notice must be submitted. Satisfactory evidence includes letters, notes of home visits, meetings, telephone calls etc.

*N.B. for ULA and ISA PN's consideration should always be given to whether it is appropriate to issue to absent parents.*

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<sup>3</sup> Truancy/unauthorised/irregular school attendance refers to absence from school without permission or good reason and the absence is unauthorised by the school.

### Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for Irregular school attendance/unauthorised leave of absence

Discretion will be used to enable up to two penalty notices to be issued to each parent for each child within a twelve month period. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team may instigate legal proceedings.

### Number of Penalty Notices which can be issued for pupils identified during a school attendance and exclusion sweep

School attendance and exclusion sweeps take place in Essex and children stopped are often with parents condoning the absence.

If the Head Teacher has not authorised the absence of a pupil stopped by a Local Authority Officer and Police Officer on a sweep and there has been at least 9 unauthorised absences for that pupil during the preceding 10 schools weeks, school will issue a legal action warning letter to the parent within 14 days. If there are any further unauthorised absences, during the following 18 calendar weeks a referral to the Attendance Compliance Team may be submitted for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for pupils identified on a school attendance and exclusion sweep. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance the Attendance Compliance Team will instigate legal proceedings.

### Excluded children

When a child is excluded from school, the parent will be responsible for ensuring that their child is not found in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion. (Section 103 Education and Inspections Act)

The excluding school must have notified the parent informing them of their duty and warning that a penalty notice could be issued.

Where there is more than one person liable for the offence, a separate penalty notice may be issued to each person.

Where a pupil is present in a public place in the first five days of a fixed period exclusion the Essex Local Authority would issue a penalty notice if the school is in their area. Where the child has been permanently excluded, it would be the authority where the child resides.

### Number of penalty notices which can be issued for exclusion

Essex will issue a maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent for each child during a 12 month period.

### Number of penalty notices which can be issued for unauthorised leave of absence

Essex will issue no more than two penalty notices to a parent in a twelve month period for unauthorised leave of absence. If the law continues to be broken around school attendance, the Attendance Compliance Team will consider further legal interventions.

## **PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICE**

The penalty for each parent issued with a Penalty Notice is £120 for each child, however if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, it is reduced to £60. (Service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first class post).

All penalties are paid to the LA and revenue generated is retained to administer the system and contribute towards s444 prosecutions following the non-payment of the Penalty Notice.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Attendance Compliance Team will either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice. The prosecution is not for non-payment of the notice but is a prosecution for irregular school attendance – Education Act 1996 Section 4441.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a penalty notice.

#### **WITHDRAWAL OF PENALTY NOTICE**

A penalty notice may be withdrawn by the local authority named in the notice under the following circumstances:

- Where the local authority deems it ought not to have been issued i.e. where it has been issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct or where the evidence does not support the issuing of a penalty notice
- It appears to the local authority that the notice contains material errors
- Where it has been issued to the wrong person named as the recipient.

#### **CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND ITS LOCAL PARTNERS**

The Attendance Compliance Team and its local partners will review this Code of Conduct bi-annually unless local needs require otherwise.

#### **VERSIONS**

Original Code of Conduct was introduced in September 2004.

Most recent revision - November 2017

Revised March 2019 for implementation from April 2019



## Sunnymede Junior School



### Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time

Applications should ordinarily be made not less than four weeks prior to the first date of absence being requested.

In all cases, you must allow one week from the date the form is received by the school and receiving a response.

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. **THERE IS NO ENTITLEMENT** to parents / carers to take a child out of school during term time, however you may apply to the school for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Pupil Registration Regulations 2006); the parent does not decide if the criteria for an exceptional circumstance has been met. If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent / carer for each child taken out of school. The absence will also be recorded as unauthorised. Failure to submit a leave of absence request will result in the absence being unauthorised.

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child for the reasons detailed below (further information can be attached if required).

<b>Child's Full Name</b>		<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Year Group</b>		<b>Class</b>	
<b>Child's Full Address and Postcode</b>			

<b>First date of absence</b>		<b>Last date of absence</b>	
<b>Date of return to school</b>		<b>Number of school days absent</b>	

<b>Where leave of absence requested is for half a day, will your child require a school dinner?</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
<b>Reason for request (please give full details, further details can be attached to this form).</b>				
Where applicable, please provide evidence to support your application				

<b>Name of person making request</b>		<b>Relationship to child</b>				
<b>Full Address and postcode (if different from child's above)</b>						
<b>If child above does not reside with you, does the resident parent agree with this application</b>			<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	
<b>Signature of Parent / Carer with whom child resides</b>		<b>Date</b>				

<b>If you have a child or children at another school, please detail their names and which school(s) they attend below:</b>			
Child's full name:		School:	
Child's full name:		School:	
Child's full name:		School:	

## Sunnymede Junior School - Leave of Absence from Response to Parent

### For School Office Use only

Complete the below along with a copy of any evidence provided on the pupil's school file.  
Where the school has the relevant information, ensure that both parents are aware of the decision made if they reside separately and both have parental responsibility.

<b>Child's Full Name</b>	
<b>Child's Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Child's Class</b>	

Dear	<b>Parents / carers Title, Forename and Surname</b>	
	<b>Parents / carers Title, Forename and Surname</b>	

<b>Date application received</b>						
<b>% attendance in previous 12 school weeks</b>						
<b>Percentage Attendance Year to date</b>						
<b>Number of Sessions absence this academic year</b>	<b>Authorised</b>		<b>Unauthorised</b>		<b>Total</b>	
<b>Have the family of this child been issued with a Penalty Notice in the previous 12 calendar months, if yes please state how many.</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>		<b>Total in previous 12 months</b>	

### Your application for leave of absence as detailed above has been:

<b>Authorised</b> (subject to attendance remaining at an acceptable level)		<b>Unauthorised</b> (Is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance)	
<b>Specific notes where applicable</b>			
<b>Head Teacher Name</b>			
<b>Head Teacher Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	

Updated October 2022



## Sunnymede Junior School – Notification of removal from roll

### To be completed by the parent and returned to the school office

This does not need to be completed for pupils leaving at the end of Y6 on transition to secondary school. It must be completed for any pupil in Y3,3,4,5 and who leave at the end of the academic year and for pupils in Y3,4,5 and 6 who leave part way through the academic year. (updated October 2022)

<b>Child's Name</b>	1) 2)	<b>Age</b>	1) 2)
<b>Child's Date of Birth</b>	1) 2)	<b>Class</b>	1) 2)
<b>Current Address</b>			
<b>Child's last day at Sunnymede</b> (add full date)			
<b>New Personal Address</b> (if moving house)			
<b>New school details (name / address)</b> <small>(It is essential that we receive this information as the new school will require information from us in order for them to place your child on roll. If you are unable to give this information, please explain why). You do not need to complete this section if you are going to home-educate)</small>	New School name:  School address:  Local Authority:		
<b>Has your child been formally offered a place at the school listed above?</b>	YES      NO      N/A (home-educating)		
	If, YES, what is the agreed start date?		
<b>If you are planning to home-educate, please state this in the box and write a covering letter to go with submit with this form</b> (Please be aware that by making a decision to home school, you are taking full responsibility for your child's education)			
<b>If you do not have confirmation of a place at a new school and you are not home schooling either, please explain your intentions, including the school you are hoping your child will be offered a place at</b>			
<b>Reason for leaving Sunnymede Junior School. Please tick/loop what most accurately describes your reasons.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving house / relocation out of school catchment</li> <li>• Preferred school now available</li> <li>• Attendance issues</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Child with SEN</li> <li>• Lifestyle choice</li> <li>• Medical/illness</li> <li>• Philosophical / Religious</li> <li>• Other (please explain below)</li> </ul>		
<b>Is there anything else you feel we need to know?</b>			
<b>Your Full Name</b>			
<b>Signed</b> (where both parents live in the household with the child, both should sign here where possible)			
<b>Your Relationship to child</b>			
<b>Do you have parental rights?</b>			
<b>Is there anyone else with parental rights?</b>			
<b>Where your child has a parent with parental rights but do not live with you and the child, have you advised them that their child is leaving Sunnymede Junior School?</b> Please give details if explanation is required	YES      NO      NOT APPLICABLE		
<b>Date</b>			

## Notification of Removal of Pupil from School Roll

**For school use only:**

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmation of receipt of this form / reply to parent	
New school contacted (date and name of person spoken to)	
Date of admission confirmed with new school	
CTF sent to new setting (not until child has been placed on roll)	Sent on: _____ Name: _____ Method of sending: electronic Confirmation of receipt from school received: _____
Hard copy pupil file sent to new school setting	Sent on: _____ Name: _____ Method of sending: _____ Confirmation of receipt from school received: _____
Safeguarding/CP file sent by DSL (if applicable) within five days of leaving	Sent on: _____ Name: _____ Method of sending: _____ Confirmation of receipt from new school received: _____
Local authority informed of removal from roll (by day they are deleted from school records)	Date: _____
Local Authority informed within 5 days of leaving via Infolink portal	Sent on: _____ By: _____
SEND file sent by SENCo (if immediately after leaving)	Sent on: _____ Name: _____ Method of sending: _____ Confirmation of receipt from new school received: _____
Removal from roll (add date)	
Headteacher informed and copy of this complete form passed to them for their records	
Class teacher informed	
Pupil's accounts deleted e.g. rock star / DoodleMaths / Boom Reader	
Parent removed from ParentMail hard copy pupil detail file etc	
Pupil removed from Target Tracker (Head)	
Any other actions taken to safeguard pupil (please add detail)	
Pupil records archived within school where no onward school (e.g. home schooling)	
Child Protection / Safeguarding records archived within school where no onward school (e.g. home schooling)	
Signed	
Name	
Position in school	
Date	

This form should be kept as a record of a child being removed from the school roll

Updated Oct 2022

