

Attendance Policy

Clarity Independent School

Bridge Barn Farm
Woodhill Road
Sandon
CM2 7SG

Clarity Independent School is committed to safeguarding...

"Our school is committed to our whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies...We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and caregivers to keep children safe."

Clarity Safeguarding Policy September 2026

Written by Debbie Hanson

Version [7.0]

Written: 25th March 2019

Update: June 2026

Updated by Name: Richard Clow

Contacts and Roles

At Clarity Independent School, our Senior Attendance Lead is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school. Contact details:

Richard Clow.

Tel: 01245 408606. Email: SENCO@clarity.essex.sch.uk

Daily attendance queries or reporting are handled by the Admin Team. Contact details:

Tel: 01245 408606. Email: admin@clarity.essex.sch.uk

Where attendance meets the threshold of needing a safeguarding approach, our DSL will work with the Senior Attendance Lead and the Admin Team to ensure safeguarding procedures are enacted. Contact details:

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1. Aims

Clarity Independent school aims to meet its obligations with regards to keeping children safe by (not limited to):

- Maximising attendance of all pupils, ensuring maximum learning opportunities
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence and work in partnership with families to provide support and nurture where necessary
- Ensuring that potential barriers to attendance are explored with the child and family and preventative interventions are applied and reviewed regularly.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Creating a culture that promotes the responsibility for monitoring attendance as a duty of all staff
- Working with a 'joined up' approach between senior leadership, the DSL and the local authority where attendance reaches thresholds of concern

- Ensuring that parents and care givers are aware of and endeavour to adhere to the school's attendance policy
- Ensuring that parents and care givers are aware of their legal responsibilities and the potential consequences of not meeting these
- Timely reporting to the Local Authority of pupils on a reduced timetable

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Annex B, details the importance of good attendance at school:

“All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called ‘honour’-based abuse, or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.”

Keeping Children Safe in Education clarifies the following terms as:

‘Children absent from education (CAFE)’ – are children on the school roll but who are regularly not attending.

‘Children missing education (CME)’ – are children not on roll at any school or being educated elsewhere.

CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. A target of 95% attendance is set for all pupils, whilst realising that for pupils with special educational needs

and disabilities, along with social emotional mental health needs, this requires a highly supportive, nurturing, more concessional approach for them and their families.

With this in mind, attendance targets are set on a case-by-case basis always with the aim of meeting their needs and improving their attendance *towards* meeting national average attendance targets. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

2. Legislation and guidance

- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [Essex Code of Conduct. Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants and Parents of Pupils Excluded from school, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance July 2026](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.pdf](#)
- Guidance on Legal Intervention for School Attendance
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance 2025](#)
- [ECC: Essex Let's Talk Resources 2026](#)
- [ECC: Essex Support First Toolkit 2026](#)
- [Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance, DfE guidance](#) (Feb 2023).
- [Effective Practice Examples - Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance, DfE](#) (Feb 2023)
- [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [Addressing Attendance in Essex: Attendance Road Map for schools and other professionals](#) (September 2024)
- [Attendance – Statutory legal interventions](#) (September 2024)



For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers.

This is important not just for your child's learning, but also for their overall wellbeing, wider development and their mental health. It's not just children who fail to attend school who miss out, but those around them too.

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. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Although Independent Schools are permitted to set their own attendance rules, our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

School registration times:

Morning registration starts: 09:00. Morning registration closes: 09:30.

Afternoon registration starts: 13:00. Afternoon registration closes: 13:30.

End of the school day: 15:00.

The attendance register will be taken at 9.15am each school day by a member of the teaching team and 1pm during each afternoon by a member of the office team who co-ordinate and monitor any absences, appointments or offsite visits. The children's attendance will be registered on Go4Schools by the school office, and an automated report

issued for the fire register to be placed by the front door in case of emergency evacuation. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

(Please see Appendix 7 for new attendance codes in effect from 1st September 2024.)

Pupils must arrive in school at 9.00 am on each school day. Children will be marked late if they are not present at school and registered by 9.30am. A log will be kept on the school's information system, Go4Schools, of children who are persistently late (not due to Local Authority transport reasons).

Reduced and part-time timetables

During settling in periods for new pupils entering the school, or during periods of reintegration after a long-term absence, pupils might be on a reduced timetable to build up attendance gradually with the aim of working towards full-time attendance. In these cases, a pupil whose agreed attendance begins after 9:30am will be signed in as present on the fire register upon arrival. A new fire register (in the red folder) will be generated to replace the existing one showing all pupils who are present in the building. Where pupils on agreed later start times arrive after registration closes, a member of the admin team will admit the pupil and escort the pupil straight to class for a handover if this forms part of an agreed transition routine. The admin team will then be aware of attendance and will input information on the register.

Any entries on the initial register showing a pupil who has left school early will be transferred to the updated register. Where a pupil's reduced timetable includes leaving before 3:00pm, the Keyworker will write on the fire register against the relevant pupil's name to show 'Home' and the time the pupil has left the premises.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time, and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

Part-time timetables should have a proposed end date that considers the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time at school. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

If the pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school will discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority to explain the rationale for it before gaining their agreement and authorisation, so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code C2).

When children attend a trip provided by the school, which leaves from the school premises following registration and returns before the end of the school day, the Keyworker will sign the children out and back in on the Trip register (blue folder).

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). The school office will phone parents / carers initially at 9.30am on the day of absence when the reason for the absence is unknown.

Where illness is reported, the school has a duty to request information in line with government advice to ascertain the symptoms and actions taken by the parent to combat the illness. This will be recorded on the register as a note.

Unplanned absence can also include issues with local authority funded transport. It is the duty of the parent to liaise with the local authority and transport provider to ensure a swift resolution where transport causes attendance issues. Parents will be asked to confirm the steps they are taking to resolve the issue, to prevent extended periods of absence. This will be recorded on the register as a note. Where confirmed parent efforts do not secure a resolution, the school will support by communicating with the local authority as a joined-up approach to secure attendance.

Parents must continue to report absence daily even if the circumstances for absence remain the same. By doing this, the school can record the most accurate code on the register and maintain contact to satisfy safeguarding requirements.

Parents should also provide a written explanation of absence on their child's return to school, using the Reporting Absence Retrospectively Form (please see Appendix 2). If any member of staff is concerned about a child's absence, the Head Teacher should be informed.

The Head Teacher will decide whether to accept the explanation offered afterwards and authorise the absence.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance written notice is required for authorising these absences. Written confirmation of these appointments is also requested in the form of an appointment card or letter / text / email from the medical practitioner.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and attend school for the rest of the day.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance, in writing to the Head Teacher. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Following up absence

The school office will follow up any absences within 30 minutes of the agreed arrival time for morning registration. This reduces to within 15 minutes for those pupils on a part-time timetable whose agreed arrival is after 9:15am. If no contact is made or reason given for absence after the first contact, the office will make further attempts to contact home to establish a reason for absence. If this continues to be unsuccessful, the office will alert the Attendance Lead to investigate the absence further by continuing to attempt contact with parents/carers and additionally provided contacts, until successful communication can be made to ascertain the reason. This will enable proper safeguarding action to be taken by the safeguarding team where necessary. The Headteacher will also be alerted to identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Where parents/carers do not respond to efforts to be contacted, the office will be alerted to record the absence as unauthorised until contact is established, and further information is gained that might allow for the code to be changed. All communications and attempts to communicate are recorded on CPOMs.

Parents are requested to use the Reporting Absence Retrospectively Form (see Appendix 2) by a member of the admin team, to report absence when the child returns to school. It is

essential that we gain contact with parents / caregivers to ensure their child is safe, and this is our duty of care as well as being a statutory requirement placed on the school.

If we cannot gain contact with parents / caregivers, we will follow the Essex County Council procedure for contacting parents; 'Essex County Council Step by Step Guide to First Day Calling' (please see Appendix 3 for more information.)

3.5 Reporting to parents

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, will be reported to the parents at the end of the academic year within their child's end of year report and as part of the Annual Review that occurs at an agreed time during the year. Regular communications occur between school and home throughout the working week. This encompasses initial discussions about attendance issues should there be any.

4. Authorised, unauthorised and continued absence

The decision to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher.

Authorised absences

These are absences where the school gives permission for a child to be away in advance, or accepts the explanation offered afterwards. These include being absent due to illness, a funeral, a medical appointment, or a religious observance for example.

The following types of absence may be marked as authorised:

- Leave of absence authorised by the Headteacher (such as time off due to bereavement).
- Illness: you must notify your child's school on the morning of their first day of absence.
- Illness: where mental health still prevents attendance even after advised strategies are applied at home.
- Medical or dental appointments, although you should try to arrange these outside school hours if possible.
- Religious observance.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence when the family is travelling for occupational purposes.
- Where local authority transport issues beyond the control of the pupil and parent/carer affect attendance.
- Offsite educational activities: this could include music, dance or drama exams, or participation in a sporting event. Approval is at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- Exceptional circumstances only; time away under extenuating circumstances, authorised by the Head Teacher, who will specify how many days are approved.

Once the absence is authorised / unauthorised, the Office staff enter it into the school office calendar.

Any requests for authorised absence should be put in writing in advance of the absence, to the Head Teacher on the school's '**Application for Authorised Absence from School During Term Time**' request form (please see Appendix 1). This is also available from the school office or on the school's website.

Unauthorised absences

Certain types of absence will be marked as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Head Teacher. Parents have a [legal responsibility](#) to ensure their child attends school (unless they have formally registered as home educating), and local authorities can bring legal action against families where attendance levels cause concern. By advising you that the Head Teacher cannot authorise an absence that you may apply for in advance, we are helping to protect you against such action.

Unauthorised absences are those **not** approved by the school, and typically include:

- Holidays and outings
- Absences with no explanation or where the reason provided has not been evidenced
- Long, persistent absences where there is little or no attempt to work with school and outside agencies to support the child back into school
- Long, persistent absences stating illness as the reason, where no medical advice has been sought or diagnosis of illness or evidence of treatment has been obtained / given

If your child is late to school and the registers have closed, it will be marked as an unauthorised absence. If they arrive later in the morning, this will be changed to being marked as 'late', providing a satisfactory reason for the lateness has been given.

At times, the Head Teacher may choose to authorise absences in unusual, very exceptional circumstances; however, a school with lots of absence, whether authorised or not, is likely to come under scrutiny from both regulatory bodies and the local authority. The Headteacher or Senior Attendance Lead may contact the Senior Attendance Lead or Headteacher at the child's sibling's school to confirm their intentions surrounding authorising a requested absence for the sibling, to offer a joined-up response to parents from both schools. This may be where the absence requested at Clarity is unclear as to whether it would be considered *extenuating* circumstances, e.g. a request for a term time holiday. Our enquiries will not exceed our mandate to ensure compliance with Data Protection laws.

Please note, excessive, unauthorised absence may result in the Local Authority retracting your child's place at the school.

Continued, long-term absence

It is a parent's (or legal caregiver's) responsibility to make sure their child attends a school to access their education *every term-time day*, unless they are too poorly to attend or have formally registered to home educate.

Authorised long-term absence: In periods of authorised absence from school where the child is well enough to learn at home, it is the expectation that home learning will take place because it is important the children continue their education every term-time day. Please see our 'Home Learning Policy' for how we will put this into place to support the child's education whilst they are away from school.

Valid long-term health problems: Sometimes, absence may persist for very valid reasons, such as a long-term health problem. This is where an illness (including mental health) has been diagnosed by a qualified, accredited medical professional, and they have advised that the child is not able to attend school and is therefore being supported and treated by the NHS or other accredited medical professional, with a view to returning.

Non-valid long-term absence explanations: Please note, the school will **not** accept explanations of long-term illnesses, which have **not** been diagnosed by a medical professional and / or which are **not** being supported / treated by medical professionals, as a valid reason for absence and may discuss this with the parent / caregiver as a cause for concern and report it to the safeguarding children's board.

Medical documentation: If the child is absent for more than 5 consecutive school days, the parent / caregiver is requested to provide medical documentation or a description of what has been put into place, to reassure the school that the child has seen the doctor for a diagnosis, the appropriate medical treatment is being sought to care for the child in their absence from school and to support them back to school. Records of this are stored on the school's information system; Go4Schools and safeguarding system; CPOMS. Medical documentation includes (but is not limited to) examples such as a doctor appointment card, letter, medical certificate, or diagnostic letter etc. This evidence is necessary for us to satisfy our safeguarding duty of care that the child is receiving medical attention where necessary.

Persistent, unauthorised absence: If the child is persistently absent for no authorised reason, an attendance team, which may consist of the Headteacher, Assistant Head, DSL,

SENDCO and members of the Local Authority e.g. Education Welfare's Officer¹ (Attendance Compliance Officer), will work with the family to:

1. Listen and validate the reasons provided for absence
2. Ensure medical support has been sought and continued and assist with this where we can
3. Support them to safeguard the child whilst they are absent
4. Support the family to encourage the child back to school, applying the appropriate strategies
5. Work with the family to improve the child's attendance by making an 'Attendance Support Plan' where necessary
6. Organise work to be sent home for the child as a temporary measure until they return to school.

Please note, where the primary concern for persistent absence is of a safeguarding nature, the Attendance Support Plan will be conducted, and evidence of support will be recorded via the school's safeguarding record system; CPOMS.

An 'Attendance Support Plan': This is a collaborative document that places the emphasis on an early response to identifying barriers to consistent attendance and then provides targeted interventions and support to help the child, along with their parents / caregivers, to improve the child's attendance. Parent and pupil Attendance Difficulties Rating Scales documents will need to be completed and analysed in the first instance, to inform the content of the Attendance Plan. This Attendance Support Plan is a voluntary, signed, written agreement between all parties and the child (if able to), to agree the ways in which all parties will work together to improve the child's attendance.

During this process, it is expected that the parent / caregiver and child will work with the school to follow the 'Attendance Support Plan' to support the child e.g. with medical care and accessing their education from home and promote the child's return to school as soon as possible.

Once enacted, the plan will be reviewed after a period of approximately four weeks, at which point the Attendance Lead and SENDCo will meet with the parents / caregivers to determine the progress that has been made and update the plan to reflect further strategies if the original plan has been ineffective. If, at a second review, attendance strategies have not been effective or the parents / caregivers have not upheld their agreement to implement the stated strategies, a decision will be made by the Headteacher to consider the involvement of the Local Authority.

Not following the Attendance Support Plan: The school does **not** support long-term absence, where there is no aim of returning to school or no agreement made to follow an 'Attendance Support Plan'. Ultimately, if their child continues to miss school, The Local Authority may take legal action against the parent / caregiver, which may involve penalties, fines, or a custodial sentence.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

Before a penalty notice is issued, a Notice to Improve will be sent to parents/ care givers. This is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

The Notice to Improve is expected to include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.
- A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.
- Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next

4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

At Clarity, we understand that the National Framework for penalty notices applies to all schools. However, as a SEND Independent School supporting pupils with Education Health Care Plans, we review each episode of absence on a case-by-case basis and will adopt a supportive approach at the discretion of the Headteacher in accordance with the Attendance Lead upon review of the case. If the threshold is reached, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to gain their advice. Within this communication, the Local Authority will be asked to consider the pupil's current record of attendance, reasons for absence and the early intervention strategies in place before a decision is made on further action.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice. From July 2026 the following penalty costs may apply:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 set out the statutory requirements for schools. 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 do **not** have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

The decision over whether to issue a Truancy Penalty Notice rests with the Head Teacher, although in some areas, local authorities issue them automatically. The local authority (and not the individual school or Headteacher) impose the fixed penalty notice and receive the money.

The decision to issue a penalty notice will follow the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

In addition, ***persistent absence may result in the Local Authority withdrawing their agreement with the school on funding the child's place.*** In such cases, we may need to discuss the termination of the school placement with the parent / caregiver.

Collection of children from school without previous authorisation:

At Clarity, children are usually transported to and from school via taxis provided by the Local Authorities, or in some cases parents may prefer to transport their child themselves, routinely. However, the school recognises that any parent / carer / person with parental responsibility has a legal right to collect their child from the school at any time, or send another previously identified person to act for them by proxy, as long as:

- There is no court order in place preventing this, and
- As long as there are no genuine safeguarding concerns over a child's immediate safety if they were released to the parent / carer, for example, they are not under the influence of a controlled substance e.g. alcohol or drugs, or it is genuinely believed that they could cause harm to the child, or an emergency situation that requires intervention of the relevant authorities (police, social services) and
- There is no dispute over parental responsibility (we may refer to legal documentation / advice from the Local Authority) and
- There is no dispute over custody arrangements (we may follow court orders that state the child may only be released to the parent who has the right to collect them on that day) or

- A parent / person acting by proxy for the parent, cannot identify themselves (we will ask for the name and address of a proxy from the known parent / carer before releasing the child at the gate)

Please note - the 'Reporting Absence Retrospectively' form should still be completed. In addition, the decision whether to authorise the absence or not, still rests with the Headteacher.

Parental responsibility

This means the rights and responsibilities a parent has over a child.

This includes:

- Biological mothers (automatically)
- Female partners married to the biological mother at the time of conception (unless conception came from intercourse)
- The father if named on the birth certificate or in a civil partnership with the mother or married to the mother at the time of the child's birth (this is not lost in the event of a divorce).

The father not in marriage or civil partnership with the mother, may gain parent responsibility through a Parental Responsibility court order or agreement, or he jointly registers the birth with the mother and is named on the birth certificate.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

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

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

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Remind parents/carers about the importance of children attending school every term-time day unless the child is ill, and needs to see a doctor or have another authorised reason
- Promote the benefits of high attendance to access specialist interventions, and for social and academic progress
- Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law

- Celebrate excellent attendance by reporting individual achievements
- Work empathically with parents/carers where attendance becomes a concern

Children who achieve at or above attendance targets for the year or demonstrate significant improvements by working with the school to improve their attendance, will be awarded certificates. Attendance is discussed at the Annual Review of the EHCP plan.

The school's Mission Statement states that we aim to, "Provide for the children's needs, to enable them to enjoy learning, love being here, and be excited to come to school each day." The school believes that internal motivation is the best strategy for promoting attendance.

6. Monitoring and analysing attendance data

The Senior Leadership Team regularly monitors attendance and absence data to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include pupils with incomplete weeks, lateness, periods of extended absence and pupils on settling in timetables. Where pupil absence becomes a concern, attendance will be monitored weekly. Early intervention will be used if patterns of absence or irregular attendance emerge and a graduated approach to assess, plan, do and review will be implemented to assess the impact of initial and ongoing actions. In collaboration with the pupil and family and if early intervention has been unsuccessful, Attendance Support Plans and support from the local authority and other external agencies can be used in an advisory capacity to identify interventions to improve attendance.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.0 Parents

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

- To perform their legal duty to ensure their children attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child must be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- To promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.
- To aim to meet the minimum target of 95% attendance set for all pupils.
- To report absence to the school office (01245 408 606) on the day of absence by 9.15am at the latest.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- To request the authorisation of absence for unavoidable term time appointments, 1 week before, using the relevant form in Appendix 1, or retrospectively where necessary in the case of an emergency, using form in Appendix 2.
- To promote the importance of education to their children, as a healthy way of living, and a way of increasing life chances and opportunities both now and for their futures.
- To support their children to attend school through establishing and maintaining healthy, consistent home routines which facilitate attendance at school.
- To work with the school and Local Authority to identify potential barriers to attendance and support their child in making and maintaining an Attendance Support Plan, where this becomes necessary.
- To proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support including attendance contracts or voluntary early help plans to prevent the need for legal intervention.
- To work with the school to provide safeguarding information about their child's wellbeing, if the child is unable to come to school.
- To support their child with medical and therapeutic intervention, updating school on progress, during any period of absence, with the intention of supporting the child's needs and removing barriers to regain good attendance.

7.1 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the DfE. The Head Teacher, in collaboration with the Attendance Lead, also ensures that staff have the training and skills to perform their roles in promoting and monitoring attendance.

7.2 Office Staff

- Monitoring the answerphone and office emails for messages before 9am from parents notifying of their child's absence and passing these messages onto teaching staff
- Taking calls after 9am from parents / caregivers about absence and reasons for absence / liaising by email with them if before 9am
- Recording attendance on Go4Schools and communications on CPOMS making sure that identified pupils have an explicit note at the top of the record to state the number of days since last parent contact and number of term time days since pupil last seen (in the format 'X DAYS SINCE PARENT CONTACT' and 'X DAYS SINCE PUPIL LAST SEEN')

- Gaining contact with parents / caregiver when a child has not come to school by 9.30am every day until their return, (although the responsibility to contact the school with a satisfactory reason for absence still rests with the parent / caregiver)
- Following the guidance instructions on the 'Persistent Absence Log' page 1 and passing on this information, daily, to the Class Teachers
- Alerting the Attendance Lead, SENDCO, DSL (where applicable) and Headteacher
- Liaising with the Head Teacher to authorise the absence and to receive the appropriate code and note to use for the attendance register (to be agreed by the Attendance Lead)
- Liaising with Class Teachers, DSL, SENDCO, Assistant Head and cc Head regarding reasons for absence via CPOMS
- If the Office Staff are working from home, they continue with this role as usual
- If the Office Staff are absent from work and not able to work from home, their responsibilities rest with the Assistant Head
- Updating the attendance register on Go4 Schools.

7.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily in the register
- Passing the information on to the Office Staff to be entered into Go4Schools and the Persistent Absence log if applicable
- Coordinating which member of staff who knows the child well, to conduct a wellbeing call for children in their class when absent from school from day 1, or authorised to be working from home, liaising with the Attendance Lead and SENDCO for strategies / advice to give the child / parents / caregivers where necessary.
- Passing on information from wellbeing calls back to the relevant, appropriate staff; Office Staff for recording, Attendance Lead, SENDCO, DSL and Assistant Head, about:
 - The pupil's wellbeing
 - Whether the parents' / caregivers have sought medical diagnosis and care if the child is reported to be ill / anxious
 - Any safeguarding risks or issues - report to DSL (on CPOMS) as safeguarding concern
 - Any possible threats to continued attendance or return to school
 - When the child is expected to return to school
- Organising work to be sent home for children in their class who have authorised absence but are able to work from home, cc Attendance Lead, SENDCO, DSL, Assistant Head

- Collecting work from teachers teaching each curriculum subject and sending this home for the same reasons as above
- Inform the Attendance Lead, SENDCO, DSL, Assistant Head if the pupil does not complete home learning and liaise with the person doing the daily wellbeing calls to encourage and support this to happen
- Assists the SENDCO in forming an Attendance Support Plan where necessary and ensuring it is implemented daily at school

7.4 The SENDCO

- Forms and builds strong relationships with the parents / caregivers and offers support and advice on attendance
- Provides advice and support for staff conducting wellbeing calls to give to parents / children about strategies for helping manage anxiety about school and other mental health issues
- Signposting parents to external specialists who can provide advice / support whilst absent
- Providing further support to parents / caregivers / children during periods of absence from school, in addition to, or taking over from, daily wellbeing calls conducted by teaching staff, liaising with the DSL, Assistant Head and cc Head
- Provides advice and support about the child's individual needs, especially when needing to be considered for an 'Attendance Support Plan'

7.5 The Attendance Lead

- Forms and builds strong relationships with the parents / caregivers and offers advice / support on attendance matters by identifying barriers to attendance and forming strategies to address poor attendance
- With the assistance of the Office Staff and class teachers, monitors individual attendance data for pupils
- Acts on alerts from the school office and follows up absences, working in conjunction with the office staff and Headteacher to establish the correct code for marking absence
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher and DSL where a safeguarding risk is evident
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues as part of the attendance support team where there are known or believed risks, working closely with the SENDCO and safeguarding lead
- Assists and leads on the development of the 'Attendance Support Plan' if absence continues past 5 consecutive days or there are frequent episodes of absence reducing attendance to below 90% (where applicable) (CAFÉ)

- Records attendance linked communications and actions on CPOMs
- Seeks advice from Local Authority Attendance Teams where absence is judged to be an ongoing concern
- Records the narrative to provide a holistic record of attendance issues and patterns of attendance on the Persistent Non-Attendance log.
- Makes half-termly reports to the respective Local Authorities on the progress of pupils who are on a reduced timetable.

7.6 The Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Forms and builds strong relationships with the parents / caregivers and offers advice / support on safeguarding matters
- Supports the development of the 'Attendance Support Plan'
- Contacts the Children and Families hub for advice where safeguarding thresholds are met
- Leads on the Attendance Support Plan and procedures under the following instances:

If a pupil is believed to be at risk, missing, or the reason provided has not been evidenced (or no reason provided at all) or if the DSL is concerned at all for the child's safety, safeguarding procedures will be followed as per the school's Safeguarding Policy. In such cases, the DSL will take over monitoring the child's absence with the assistance of other staff involved in the attendance process. The DSL will liaise with teaching staff regarding sending work home and conducting welfare calls, until the child is believed to be not at risk, at which point the SENDCO can resume monitoring and supporting until the pupil's return. The DSL must work with the local authority children's services where absence indicates a safeguarding concern.

Overall responsibility for attendance in **Clarity Independent School** rests with the Head Teacher, Debbie Hanson.

Appendix 1: Application for Authorised Absence from School During Term Time

Dear Head Teacher,

Date

I would like to request permission for my child to be absent from school. I consider this absence unavoidable for the reasons listed below. *(Please note, parents are requested to book routine medical or other appointments outside the school day to prevent learning and intervention time being lost. We cannot authorise more than a maximum of half a day for these appointments and will be expecting to see your child during the remainder of the day.)*

Reason for requesting unavoidable absence during school day (please give full details.):

.....
.....

Name of child: Keyworker:

Date and time absence begins: Date and time return to school:

If returning in time for lunch break, please confirm if they will be eating their lunch at school as usual: Yes ☐ No ☐

Name of person making request: Relationship to child:

Signature:

Date:

*Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to his/her educational progress. You may apply to the school for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and as per our Attendance Policy, available on the school website and Office. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Parents should **not** take their children on holiday in term time, there is no legal right to do so. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway the Missing Education and Child Employment Service may issue a Penalty Notice for £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school. Persistent absence also may threaten the Local Authority's position on continuing to fund the placement for your child at Clarity Independent School*

.....
For School / Office Use Only :

Signed: (Headteacher) Date:

*If your child does not attend school on the above date(s) and no contact is made to the school, a penalty notice may be issued by the Missing Education & Child Employment Service.

Please email your completed form back to admin@clarity.essex.sch.uk.

Thank you for your assistance.

Copy to: ☐ Parent ☐ Pupil File ☐ CPOMS ☐ Go4Schools

Appendix 2: Reporting Absence Retrospectively Form

Please complete and return to the School Office within 1 day of your child returning to school. If the reason for the absence is due to a doctors / dentist / hospital appointments please provide documentation, **without this the absence will be unauthorised**.

Please note that for Sickness and / or Diarrhoea, children cannot return to school for **48 hours following their last episode**. Please discuss with the Head Teacher before sending them back into school if your child has had an infectious illness / disease, (please see [UKHSA Guidance on Health Protection in Education and Healthcare Settings](#) for examples and advice (see ** below for link)).

The school should also be informed of any absence by 8.30am on the day.

Child's Name:	Child's Class:
First date of absence:	Last day of absence:
Duration of absence:	
Appointment Letter / Card Provided:	YES / NO / NOT APPLICABLE (Please circle)
Reason for absence:	

Please sign, date and return. Thank you.

Parent / Guardian Name:

Parent / Guardian Signature:

Date:

****UKHSA can be found at:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-3-public-health-management-of-specific-infectious-diseases>

Copy to: ☐ Parent ☐ Pupil File ☐ CPOMS ☐ Go4Schools ☐ cc. DSL

Appendix 3: Template sent with 'un-authorising attendance' letter



Essex County Council

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period
- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**
- If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate's Court**

- **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500**
- Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**

Appendix 4: Essex County Council Step by Step Guide to First Day Calling and Beyond

When no reason for absence has been provided by the parent/ carer, schools should as a minimum follow the below steps

Pupils deemed at risk	Pupils deemed at high risk: • Children subject to a child protection plan • Looked After children If these children are absent and there has been no contact - notify the key worker within the first 24 hours. School's must notify the Family Operations Hub and / or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit immediately if: • It is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm • There is information that a pupil is, or may be, a victim of criminal activity • At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
Day 1 of absence	• Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible • Record actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 2 of absence	• Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible • If no response - telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return call • If international dialling tone is heard, leave message advising of this and ask for a call back. ▪ This may indicate they are on holiday and have not notified the school ▪ If you believe this to be the case, send a 'believe absence is a holiday' letter available on Essex Schools Infolink (ESI). ▪ Letters should be sent separately to both parents first class

	Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 3 of absence	- Send absent text to parent/carers - Telephone parents/carers, if a response is not received following the text leave a message if possible - Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message asking them to return the call - Make home visit - if there is no answer leave calling card and move to next step - Send a letter of concern for absence, first class to all parents/carers and those with day-to-day care - Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 4 of absence	- Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) - Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, if there is no answer, leave a message if possible - Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return call - Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 5 of absence	- Telephone parent / carers and leave a message if possible and then follow up with an absence text - Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return call - If you believe this family are not on holiday and are concerned about the child's welfare request a welfare visit from the police - Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 6 – 8 of absence	- Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) - Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible - Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return call - Either send a further letter or make a further home-visit. If there is no answer leave calling card and move to next step - Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 9 - 10 of absence	- Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) - Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible

	• Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return call • If you have not done so already, and you believe the family are not on holiday and are concerned about the child's welfare, request a welfare visit from the police • Send a further concern letter separately to both parents / carers by first class post stating: You are making a referral to the Local Authority as their child is now considered Missing from Education • Submit the Missing Pupil Checklist on Essex School Info Link, which notifies the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team
Missing Pupil Checklist	Must be completed by the 10th day of absence, when one of the following criteria applies: • A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence • A pupil ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family is not known • A pupil has not returned from holiday within 10 school days of the expected date of return • A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the young person is unknown <u>School must continue investigations, while the Local Authority undertake their investigations.</u>
Day 11 - 19 of absence	• Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible • Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to return the call • Make another home visit during this period and leave a calling card • Inform parents / carers in writing that their child is at risk of being removed from roll • Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Day 20 of absence	• Send absent text to parent/carers (if facility to do so) • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received following the text, leave a message if possible • Telephone all contacts on SIMS/equivalent, if no answer leave message to the return call • <u>You cannot remove a child from roll until you have received notification from the Local Authority</u>

	Record all actions on SIMS/equivalent
Coding:	These absences must be coded as O for unauthorised absence due to no reason provided from parents/carers

Appendix 5: Pupil Attendance Support Re-Integration Plan

Re- Integration plan

Name:

Start date:

Class:

Keyworker:

Areas of difficulty: <i>(anxiety triggers, stressors, fears, past traumas)</i> TAKEN FROM EHCP	How this might present: <i>(How I might communicate this? What it might look like? Non-verbal body cues)</i>	Preventative Strategies <i>(What can we put in place to minimise the risks/likenhood? Who?) Be as specific as possible re resources and strategies</i>	Support Strategies <i>(What strategies will help me to regulate again? Who?) Be as specific as possible re resources and strategies</i>	Expected outcomes <i>(How will we know that the plan is working?) Apply a time frame if possible</i>

These are all the people working on this plan to support me:

(I understand that this is a working document and we can change it at any time to put fresh ideas or resources and strategies on, to help me feel more comfortable and secure about coming into school.)

School staff Name Signed

SENCO..... Signed.....

Parent Name Signed

Parent Name Signed

Pupil Name Signed

Head Teacher..... Signed.....



Appendix 6

Addressing Attendance in Essex

–

Attendance Road Map for schools and other professionals

September 2024

Appendix 7

School Attendance Codes From September 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure (unexpected only)
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other unavoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)

O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)