



Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form

Attendance Policy

Governors' Curriculum and Standards
Committee

Last reviewed:	December 2019
Next review due:	December 2021
Ratified Committee:	December 2019
Designated Postholder:	Mrs Melanie Townsend Assistant Headteacher

Attendance Policy (Years 7 – 13)

Contents

	Page Number
Introduction	3
Legal Framework	3
Aims of the Policy	4
Objectives of the Policy	4
School Responsibilities	5
Parent and Carer Responsibilities	5
The Process for Monitoring Attendance	5
Absences during Term Time	7
Lateness	7
Sickness	8
Promoting Good Attendance	8
The Role of the Investigation Officer	9
Governors	10
Appendix 1: Copy of Leave of Absence Form	11

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for a child's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. There is a strong correlation between good attendance in school and students' achievement over time. It is the expectation of the school that students attend 100% of the time. However, in the event of a child being away from school for any reason it is essential that the parent/carer informs the school of the reasons for absence.

Notley High School & Braintree Sixth Form has similarly high expectations of good attendance and punctuality for sixth form students as for students in the main school. This policy covers students in school years 7 – 11 and, where applicable, students in school years 12 & 13.

Legal Framework

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Children must be receiving an education between the school term after their fifth birthday and the last Friday in June of the school year they turn 16.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence must be reported to the school's Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy, as any absence will have an impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents and carers, together with school staff, all have a part to play in ensuring that a child's full potential is achieved.
- Students are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
 - **Authorised absence** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as justification for the absence or has given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - **Unauthorised absence** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's/carer's request.

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. A child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration alongside any relevant contextual information and as a result, the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping a child away from school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require the school to request that medical evidence is obtained from the child's doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above should to be handed to your child's tutor, who will ensure that this is passed to

the Attendance Office. Please note that the school is not asking any parent/carer to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so do performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem. The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents and carers and the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority. For students in a sixth form setting, the responsibility for high attendance and punctuality is also that of the students themselves.

Aims of the Policy

To promote regular attendance, thus offering all students equal access to learning.

Objectives of the Policy

- Create an, efficient and clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure students are in school for the maximum number of days possible, enabling students to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by their attendance at school.
- To recognise the external factors which influence school attendance and enable the school, students and parents and carers to work together to address these.

This policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

School Responsibilities

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate information and data about students' attendance and maintain systems which enable parents and carers to be kept informed about their children's attendance, such as via reports and Edulink
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- Follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: this will usually be initially via a first-day absence message sent via In Touch to parents/carers.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- Report to the Investigation Officer (IO) and support their work with students as necessary.
- Report to the government on attendance regularly, and comply with external requirements.
- Administer attendance procedures consistently.
- Ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Promote good attendance to students, staff, parents and carers.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Ensure that children can be in classrooms and be ready for the day by the start of the day at 8.40am.
- Inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- Make any request for leave in term-time as far in advance as possible.
- Make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**', giving the reason for the request.
- Work with the school and in the most serious of cases with the Local Authority and the Local Authority Investigating Officer to improve lateness and attendance.
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs a parent or carer's help in resolving.
- Talk to their child's tutor in the first instance.

Responsibilities of students in Braintree Sixth Form

- Attend and be punctual to all timetabled lessons; individual and year group tutorials and assemblies; enrichment and other organised activities.
- Attend full time, including free periods, unless given permission to use free periods independently.
- Inform school on every day of any absence.
- Request leave as far in advance as possible.
- Avoid driving lessons and medical and dental appointments during the school day.

The Process for Monitoring Attendance

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss fortnightly with the Head of House or Head of Year and senior leadership link. Where issues persist, the following will steps will be initiated:

Stage 1:

Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make contact with home. This may be via email or phone call.

Stage 2:

If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.

Stage 3:

If the concerns persist the school will arrange a school-based meeting (SBM) or a telephone meeting.

Stage 4:

If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority to address the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the Investigation Officer will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action. Steps 1 – 3 will equally apply to Braintree Sixth Form where Heads of College will monitor and follow up issues of attendance and punctuality.

Braintree Sixth Form Attendance

Attendance will be monitored by the sixth form pastoral staff including the Student Support Officer. Any students who are absent and have not contacted the sixth form office will receive an initial enquiry request from the sixth form office, asking them to explain their absence. If attendance becomes irregular such as attendance below 95%, then the following procedure will be activated.

Level 1 attendance communication:

Attendance rates will be monitored by the sixth form office. Where a student's attendance falls below the expected level, students will be notified of the concern and will be asked to discuss their attendance with the sixth form office.

Level 2 attendance meeting:

Failure to respond to the above or to improve attendance will result in a meeting with the student's tutor to discuss their attendance.

Level 3 attendance contract and meeting:

Failure to respond to Level 2 meetings in terms of improving attendance or continued failure to co-operate with the day to day monitoring of attendance by the student's tutor will result in the use of an attendance Sixth Form Contract issued by the Head of Year. The contract will run for a half term and the student will be required to report weekly to the Head of Year to check progress.

Level 4 attendance contract:

Ongoing attendance concerns will be monitored by the Assistant Headteacher - KS5. Continued poor attendance may lead to withdrawal from KS5 subject programmes of study and referral to the Careers Officer to discuss alternative pathways in preparation for removal from the sixth form roll.

Absence during term time

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a student; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Local Authority. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate notice would be issued to each parent/carer for each child. The rate per parent/carer per child is £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the penalty notice is not paid each parent/carer may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time'. These may be obtained from Student Services.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

Lateness and punctuality

Punctuality is an important life skill, demonstrating politeness, good manners and a regard for others.

Students must be in class by 8.40am each day in Years 7-11. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Students will be marked late if they arrive at school after that time. School doors will be locked by 8.50am. Students who arrive after that time must come into the building via Student Services, where their names will be entered into the late book. Lateness will be monitored by the Head of House and detentions set for repeated lateness. Further sanctions may be used if lateness is persistent. Heads of College in Braintree Sixth Form will initially follow up issues of lateness with either phone calls or letters home.

If a student is late due to a medical appointment they will receive a late mark upon arrival at school when they sign in at Student Services. Please be advised that where possible doctors' and dentists' appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Where appointments are unavoidable, we would recommend that you make an afternoon appointment.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Parents/carers of students who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer and/or Head of House.

Sickness

Please notify the school on each day of the absence. We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate good attendance throughout our school by:

- Awarding a certificate to tutor groups with the highest attendance each half term.
- Awarding individual certificates to individual students who have 100% for each half term.
- Presenting students who have achieved 100% attendance for the term with a congratulatory 100% postcard from their Heads of House.
- Awarding certificates and badges to individual students who get 100% attendance for the whole academic year (September to July).
- Writing to students in Braintree Sixth Form if they achieve 100% attendance in lessons in each half-term.

From September 2015 (start of the 2015/16 academic year) schools have been judged against a persistent absence rate of 10 per cent. Therefore, if your child/children's attendance drops below 90% for any reason, this will be classed as 'Persistent Absenteeism' and we will monitor their attendance on a regular basis. Should their attendance not improve, parents/carers will be invited to a School Based Meeting (SBM) with their Head of House or Head of Year in Braintree Sixth Form to discuss this further.

The chart below shows the hours of learning lost in relation to attendance in school.

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

Attendance Compliance Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. Local Authority Attendance Specialists work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered student at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents/carers are guilty of an offence.” Essex Local Authority, through the Attendance Compliance Team, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents/carers when children do not attend school regularly. A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

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 .

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.

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 Headteacher 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 school 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.

We promote early intervention and aim to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. We seek to engage the parent/carer and specify what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually a half term). Parents/carers have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent/carer fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about

within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

Governors

It is the Governors' legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in the school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

NOTLEY HIGH SCHOOL & BRAINTREE SIXTH FORM

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school. As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress. There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time, however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Important: Please complete one application per child.

Name of Child	
DOB	
Tutor Group & House	
Date of first day absence	
Date of last day of absence	
Number of days requested	

Important: I confirm I attach a letter outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which a leave of absence is being applied for and understand that it is entirely the decision of the Headteacher if the reason provided constitutes an exceptional circumstance:

Signed	
Print name	
Relationship to child	
Date	

Please ensure supporting letter is clearly marked with child's name and class.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL:

Please tick and initial - form received by Form Tutor

Date: _____

Please tick and initial - form seen by Attendance Officer

Date: _____

Please tick and initial – form seen by Head of House

Date: _____

Please tick and initial – form seen by Senior Link Date: _____

NB - If this form requests leave for more than one student it is the responsibility of the receiving HoH to photocopy the form and pass it on to the other HoH as appropriate.

Details of Attendance, Year to date to be completed by Attendance

--

%

Please include any relevant information i.e. exceptional circumstances:

Authorisation given YES/NO

Letter sent, date: __

Fine YES/NO

Signature: _____

Form and file copy of the letter:

Form Tutor → Attendance Officer → HoH → Senior Link in charge of year → SSO → .