

ATTENDANCE UPDATES

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Revised DfE guidance on attendance

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/125446/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/125446/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)

[Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/125446/Toolkit_for_schools_communicating_with_families_to_support_attendance.pdf)

[Annex_A_-_example_letters_and_messages_to_parents_and_carers.odt \(live.com\)](https://live.com/annex-a-example-letters-and-messages-to-parents-and-carers.odt)

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/guidance-for-parents-on-school-attendance/) – Guide for parents on school attendance from the Office of the Children's Commissioner

The revised guidance becomes law on 19th August 2024

What do the changes mean for Sefton

❑ New Penalty Notice (PN) Code of Conduct in line with the National Framework for penalty notices (pp56 - 61 of guidance)

- PNs should continue to 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 eg an unauthorised holiday in term time
- Fines increased to £160 and £80 if paid in the first 21 days after issue
- The threshold for consideration of a PN is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, including 'O' codes or a combination of unauthorised attendance codes (G, U or O)
- Schools have a legal duty to consider issuing a PN for each individual case that meets the threshold and must not have a blanket position of issuing or issuing PNs – this is to ensure fairness across the borough
- The LA's decision on whether sufficient support has been provided before issuing a penalty notice should be treated as final

What do the changes mean for Sefton

- For O codes, U codes or a combination of unauthorised absences that meet the threshold a Notice to Improve will be issued – this is the final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued
- The Notice to Improve will contain certain information (Paragraph 186)
- Sufficient improvement can be decided on a case by case basis taking the individual family circumstances into account eg it may be that no further unauthorised absences will be appropriate or it could be that some absence may be tolerable if considerable improvement is seen
- A PN is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution therefore if repeated PNs are being issued and they are not changing behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore from Autumn 2024 only 2 PNs can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period will be charged at the higher rate (£160)
- If a third PN is requested within the 3 year period alternative action should be taken, this will often include considering prosecution

What do the changes mean for Sefton?

- A new local code of conduct for issuing penalty notices will need to be drawn up in consultation with schools and published on the website for Autumn 2024

We will be consulting Head teachers, Governing bodies and the Police

What do the changes mean for Sefton?

- Clearer link between improving attendance and the wider school culture, including the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance
- All schools must have an electronic register and the data must be shared with the DfE and the LA through WONDE
- Change Parenting contracts for attendance to Attendance contracts to better reflect the agreement between parents, schools and/or the Local Authority – we will be changing our Parenting contract
- A revised set of attendance and absence codes and grounds for deletion from the school register through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024 including a new code for part time timetables *N.B. if a child of non compulsory school age is on a pre arranged part time timetable they will be recorded as X and not the new C2 code)*

What do the changes mean for Schools ?

The expectations of schools have been updated to:

- Update the section on pupils who are prevented from attending school due to physical or mental ill health to be clear where schools' role starts and ends, provide further clarification around medical evidence, additional support for pupils with special education needs and disabilities and part-time timetables
- Explain the new requirements for schools on data sharing introduced through the Education (Information about Individual Pupils)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Provide clarification on the expectations of the schools' senior attendance champions
- Expect schools to inform a pupil's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences Sefton have a youth offending Team Education Working Group

What do the changes mean for Sefton?

The expectations of local authorities have been updated to:

- Provide further detail to clarify additional attendance services that may be traded with schools, local authority responsibilities in relation to cross border pupils and how to hold effective Targeting Support Meetings
- Allow flexibility in how local authorities work with independent schools to better suit the needs of different local independent schools
- Provide further detail on cross partnership ownership of attendance improvement

Further Sefton Updates

- Attendance Policy will be updated over the summer to reflect the changes ready for Autumn 2024
- Update on penalty notices
- Update on Targeting Support Meeting
- Team Around the School and attendance
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance to be published
- The role of the school attendance panel
- The role of the Youth Offending Service Education Working Group
- Update on Complimentary Education
- Update on children with a social worker
- Children who are SEND

Remote education (including Academy 21 through Section 19)

Pupils receiving remote education [Providing remote education: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/providing-remote-education)

- Schools must keep their own records of pupils who are receiving a remote education, such as Academy 21 (currently this is being used in some cases to fulfil the LA responsibilities under Section 19 in specific cases) Ref Section 19 see [Focus report: Out of School, Out of Sight - published 2021, amended 2023 \(lgo.org.uk\)](https://lgo.org.uk/focus-report-out-of-school-out-of-sight)
- All pupils receiving remote education **must be recorded in the register as a C Code** – authorised absence – they **must not** be recorded as B code as schools do not have a member of staff present with the pupil
- The DfE is clear that remote education should not be recorded as present, even when the remote education has Ofsted accreditation [Accreditation for online education providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accreditation-for-online-education-providers) N.B. This is not the same as Ofsted registered provision
- If the remote education is taking place on the school site (may be part of a reintegration plan) then the pupil will obviously receive a present mark for that session am/pm

Updates/Useful links

DfE Comms – Moments matter, attendance counts – for parents

[How to improve your child's school attendance and where to get support – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

DfE training calendar over the summer for schools and LAs [PowerPoint Presentation \(govdelivery.com\)](#)

All previous DfE webinars are available on the DfE You Tube Channel [Attendance - YouTube](#)

[Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts - Case study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Info for parents from the DfE:

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

[Illness and your child's education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Updates/Useful links

- Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis [ATTENDANCE-REPORT-V02.pdf \(publicfirst.co.uk\)](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Big Ambition | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)