

MAXIMISING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 2023 – HALF TERM 2

Welcome to the half-term two bulletin, we hope you are settling back in well. Please remember to check Essex Schools Info (ESI) for supporting forms and documents you may find useful.

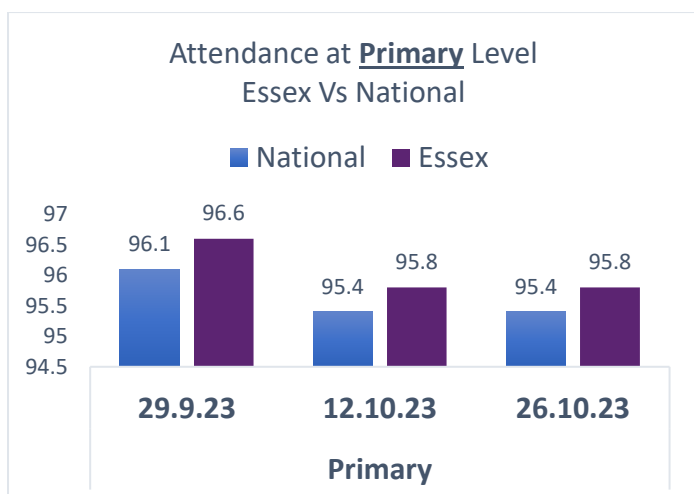
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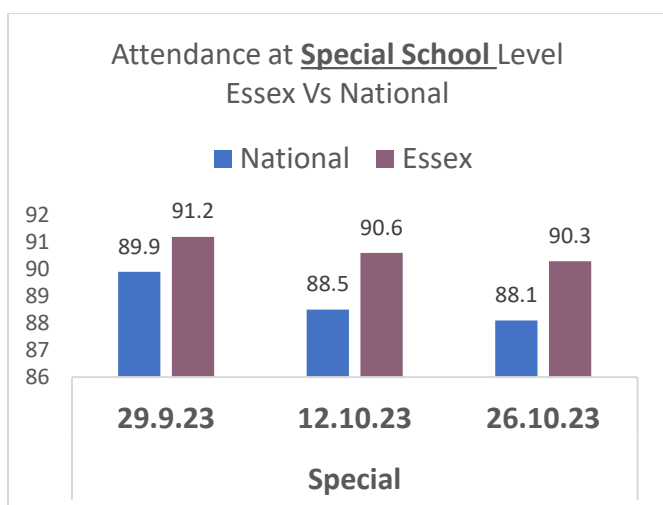
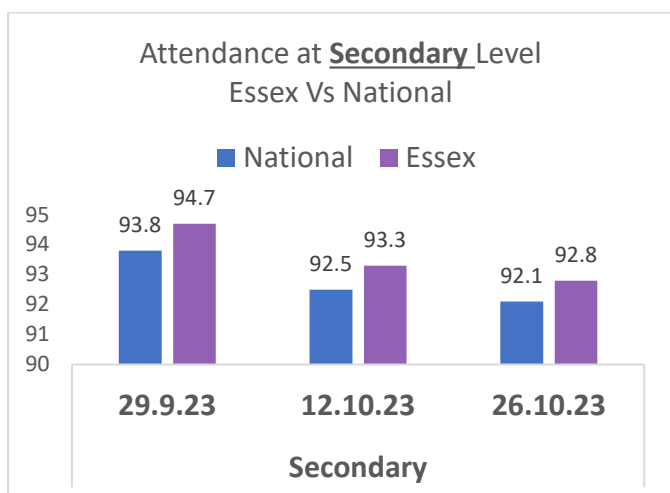
- DfE Pilot Scheme – what is the indicative data telling us in Essex? How and where to sign up
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What is the DfE Pilot (indicative data) telling us?

If you have signed up to the DfE Pilot scheme, you will have seen the valuable real-time insights available. Over 80% of all Essex schools are now signed up to the scheme and reporting how effective and useful it is. We have been advised this tool will be continually developed to allow schools to take effective, targeted steps to improve attendance at pupil and school level. As the graphs below show in all settings, the average attendance levels in Essex are higher than the indicative National averages.

Thank you to all schools for your dedicated and resolute determination to improve attendance for all our students.





Responses from schools using the DFE 'Monitor your school attendance' tool, and how to sign up?

A deputy head of a small primary school uses the service to identify children at risk of persistent absence, advising the DFE it's much easier than their own Management Information System to switch between sub-groups and use the insights with staff and parents. An assistant head teacher at a secondary school advised: *"it's really good that it's all in front of you. It makes you want to dig in more."*

Find out how to [access the service on this page](#), and [give access to your attendance leads](#).

To find out more, [sign up for the next webinar](#) on Wednesday 29 November.

Targeting Support Meetings

The Attendance Specialist Team continue to support all schools across Essex by delivering Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs). If you would like to discuss scheduling a meeting with a member of your quadrant team, please see the appropriate contact details listed below.

Our TSMs are designed to review systems and processes in school, deep dive your attendance data with targeted areas of focus, trouble-shoot your case load with best guidance advice and generally offer strategic support to encourage improved attendance in your setting.

Improving attendance – half-term 2

Attendance in schools may experience a decline following the October half-term break and, in the lead-up to, Christmas. This can largely be attributed to an increase in absence due to illness. To encourage improved attendance schools are advised to regularly and clearly communicate expectations in terms of illness absence, using the NHS/ECC Guide to Childhood illness as mentioned in our previous [Maximising Attendance Bulletin - September 2023](#). It is important all staff who regularly speak with pupils and their

families are familiar with the school's expectations and can communicate these with confidence.

What to do	What it's like	Going to school?	Getting help?	More advice
Do to school if needed, get treatment as required Some restrictions for school attendance Don't go to school and see the GP				
What it's called?				
Advice from us				
Chicken pox	Red itchy rash, small, wet, flat spots that develop into blisters (not that common)	Yes	Pharmacy	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Chicken pox	Red itchy rash, small, wet, flat spots that develop into blisters (not that common)	Yes	Pharmacy	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Common cold	Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat	Yes	Pharmacy	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Conjunctivitis	Red, itchy, watery eyes	Yes	Pharmacy	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Flu	Runny nose, sore throat, fever, muscle aches, fatigue	Yes	Pharmacy	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Hemorrhoids	Swollen, itchy, painful areas around the rectum	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Measles	Red, itchy rash, cough, sore throat, fever	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Scarlet fever	Red, itchy rash, sore throat, fever	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Shingles	Painful, itchy, red rash with blisters	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Strep throat	Sore throat, fever, swollen tonsils	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Whooping cough	Severe cough, fever, runny nose	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Yeast infection	Itchy, red, swollen, sore skin	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell
Zoster	Painful, itchy, red rash with blisters	Yes	GP	Stay off school if feeling unwell

Another strategy to minimise absence through illness in school is to consider and re-emphasize a healthy hygiene programme in the lead up to Christmas around hand washing etc.

The UK Health Security Agency has developed a health education programme called e-Bug which aims to promote positive infection prevention and control efforts for children and young people. The programme provides resources and training aimed at each key stage, which includes lesson plans on topics like hand hygiene, coughs and sneezes spreading illness etc. Check it out here: [e-Bug resource](#).

Ofsted - DfE Attendance

In conjunction with DfE, Ofsted delivered a webinar which focuses on school attendance, the national landscape and how Ofsted factor attendance in their inspections of schools. You can watch the recording [here](#). Additionally, you can review the relevant sections on attendance in the [Ofsted Inspection Handbook - September 2023](#).

Attendance Specialist Team Training Workshops

The AST workshop sessions will continue to be held online via Teams and are free for schools. Sessions can be booked via [Education Essex Online Booking System](#). This link will take you to instructions on how to register an account for your school. If you already have an account, please click 'Register/Log In' to be able to browse full details and book your space. If you would like any support with creating an account or booking on training, please contact the Workforce Development team by emailing: workforcedevelopment@essex.gov.uk (03330 139 891)

Upcoming training

- School Attendance Meetings & Reasonable adjustments – **29 November 2023, 1-2.30pm**
- How to make a successful referral for legal intervention – **24 January 2024, 11-12.30pm**
- Attendance Essentials – **6 March 2024, 1-2.30pm**

Join our team



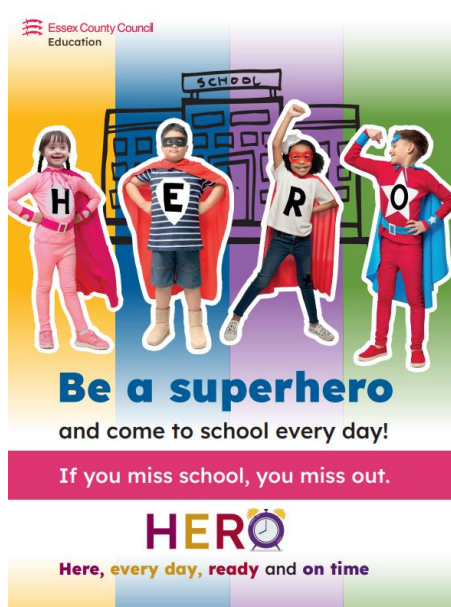
Do you have a passion for improving school attendance, would you like to join our team?

If so, check out the position of Attendance Specialist available [here](#). Closing date – Sunday 19 November 2023.

Written by the Attendance Specialist Team (AST) for schools

Essex Schools Info Link Update and Attendance Resource Pack

Remember to look at the updated attendance campaign resources on ESI:



[Supporting Improved Attendance – campaign materials including posters, bookmarks, and more](#)

Support for schools – Mental Health Support Teams

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are a government initiative to help increase children and young people’s access to support for emotional wellbeing and mental health. MHSTs are a resource in addition to the already existing support in any educational setting, and are continually expanding across South, Essex and Thurrock. You can find out if your school is currently supported by the team in your area here: [Find your school | NELFT NHS Foundation Trust](#). To find out more about the team, visit them here: [Essex Mental Health Support Teams - NELFT NHS](#)

Attendance Coding

[Working together to improve school attendance DFE Guidance](#) – guidance on coding can be found from page 55

Commissioning alternative education, or not sure if it is a B or D Code? Education Access’ [handy interactive document](#) may be able to answer your questions



Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to the success of an alternative provision placement. It is expected that alternative providers will have effective procedures for recording, monitoring, and following up on attendance. It is essential for commissioners to agree procedures with alternative providers on how they will receive accurate daily attendance data.

Commissioners are responsible for monitoring a pupil’s attendance from their confirmed start date. There should be an agreed method for receiving daily attendance from the alternative provider to ensure accurate attendance recording and, importantly, that any unexplained absences are followed up promptly. Commissioners should consider absence in the context of child protection and appropriate action to address this should be taken. Commissioners should ensure that they are aware of the alternative providers’ agreed response to pupil absence, and that it is suitable. This should include responsibility for:

- welfare calls
- timeframe for calls to be made
- action to be taken if contact is not established
- welfare visits if required.

Where the commissioner is a school, the school should follow its existing attendance policy regarding pupil absence. Where there are ongoing concerns regarding pupil attendance, an emergency review should be convened to consider further adjustments to the pupil’s provision.

Attendance when Commissioning a DfE registered AP setting

[Find out more](#)

Attendance when commissioning an unregistered AP setting

[Find out more](#)

Education Access – Reporting Attendance

The Education Access Team has procured an attendance software that will enable schools to access daily attendance for all children on their roll who are accessing unregistered alternative education commissioned by the Council. The attendance software will produce live attendance information, using standard DfE coding and provide information on the child's timetable with the provider. The system will also generate an alert to all providers where they have failed to complete the daily register.

This procurement is designed to ensure accurate attendance information is available to the Council and to schools to ensure the safe placement of all children accessing unregistered alternative education. The Education Access team aim to go live with this system from January 2024 and will provide all schools with children accessing unregistered alternative education with an account. Further information will be shared to all schools in due course and drop-in sessions will be scheduled to support with onboarding.

Attendance Specialist Team Contacts:

North East Team (incl. Clacton, Colchester, Harwich)

neattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk / 0333 032 2968, option 1

Mid Team (incl. Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon)

midattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk / 0333 032 2968 option 2

South Team (incl. Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford)

southattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk / 0333 032 2968, option 3

West Team (incl. Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford)

westattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk / 0333 032 2968, option 4

Early Help Drop-In Sessions

Sessions are designed to give partners who work with children, young people & families the chance to discuss anonymised cases, gain peer support, be signposted to advice, and help to answer general questions.

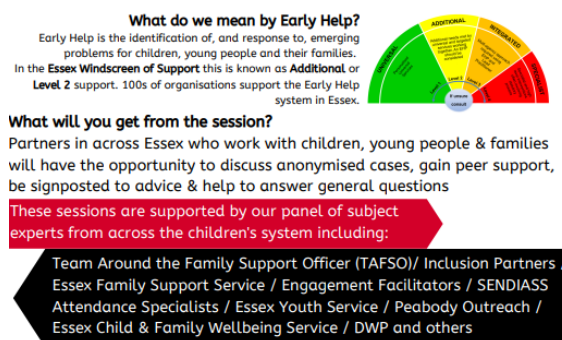
To book a session (MID & WEST), or to join your relevant meeting [CLICK HERE](#) to be taken to the interactive poster.

North East – Tuesday's – 15:30-16:30


South – Wednesday's – 12:30-13:30

West – Thursday's – 12:00-13:30

Mid – Wednesday's – 12:00-13:05



What do we mean by Early Help?
Early Help is the identification of, and response to, emerging problems for children, young people and their families. In the **Essex Windscreen of Support** this is known as **Additional or Level 2** support. 100s of organisations support the Early Help system in Essex.



What will you get from the session?
Partners in across Essex who work with children, young people & families will have the opportunity to discuss anonymised cases, gain peer support, be signposted to advice & help to answer general questions

These sessions are supported by our panel of subject experts from across the children's system including:

- Team Around the Family Support Officer (TAFSO) / Inclusion Partners / Essex Family Support Service / Engagement Facilitators / SENDIASS Attendance Specialists / Essex Youth Service / Peabody Outreach / Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service / DWP and others