

MAXIMISING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BULLETIN

SEPTEMBER 2024 – HALF TERM 1

Welcome back, we hope you had a restful Summer Break. This bulletin is a brief update, please remember to check ESI (Essex Schools Info) for supporting forms and documents you may find useful.

In this issue:

- [Statutory guidance](#)
- [End of year DfE data](#)
- [Early Intervention and support first](#)
- [Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and beyond](#)
- [Coding](#)
- [Targeting Support Meetings](#)
- [Other Supporting LA Services](#)
- [Updated Attendance Resources and ESI](#)
- [DfE Webinars](#)

Working Together to Improve School Attendance DfE:

'[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' is now statutory guidance, please ensure all school colleagues are familiar with its content.

This should be read in conjunction with the [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#): This guidance has been amended for September 2024.

End of Year DfE data:

The final data release of the Academic year 2023-24 was published 08/08/2024-please see the table below outlining the data by phase and drawing comparison between Essex and National:

Release Date	PRIMARY				SECONDARY				SPECIAL			
	ATTENDANCE		PA		ATTENDANCE		PA		ATTENDANCE		PA	
	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT
8.8.24	94.5	94.5	14.0	15.2	91.1	90.9	25.4	26.7	88.8	87.0	34.3	37.6
			1.2		0.2		1.3		1.8		3.3	

The final data release shows us that Essex Primary schools ended the Academic year with absence levels in line with the National average and 1.2% fewer persistently absent pupils. Essex Secondary schools completed the Academic year with attendance levels 0.2% higher than National and 1.3% fewer PA pupils. Essex Special schools completed the year with attendance levels 1.8% higher than National and 3.3% fewer PA pupils. This demonstrates an ongoing trend of improved attendance across the County.

Early Intervention and Support First

Written by the Attendance Specialist Team (AST) for schools

The initial weeks of school are essential for creating a positive and solid foundation for the rest of the academic year. Regular attendance during this period helps students to establish essential routines, understand academic expectations, and build relationships with their teachers and peers. Studies have shown that students with consistent attendance in the first weeks are more likely to have higher levels of engagement and academic success throughout the year. It is encouraged that school colleagues ensure rigorous data tracking systems are in place to best inform and initiate supportive conversations at the earliest opportunity. Further information regarding a 2023 study into PA pupils in the Autumn term can be found [here](#)

Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and beyond

Schools will have undertaken some work with Year 6 pupils during the summer term and will have a clear idea of the number of pupils who may need a little extra support during this major event in their lives. It is vital that any concerns a pupil may have are listened to, and they receive the support and reassurance they need to settle into their new surroundings successfully. Transition is an ongoing cycle for all school pupils. There will be those who had a shaky start last year or may find it difficult to return to school after a break, they may also need some reassurance, encouragement, and support. Pupils from Year 10 who experienced attendance difficulties last academic year, may require some intensified support and intervention in the autumn term to ease the transition into year 11 and prepare them for the year ahead. As we all know, children are all different, most will thrive, some will wobble, but if they do, you will be there to help them find their way.

Coding:

Please be advised that as of Sept 2024 absence codes have been updated in line with the Pupil (registration) (England) regulations 2024, please review pages 76-93 of the **WTISA guidance** for greater clarity around these codes. The following DfE webinar also gives greater insight into amended codes: [School Attendance Register: Attendance and Absence Codes - YouTube](#)

TSMs:

During the Autumn term the Attendance Specialist Team will be prioritising Targeting Support Meetings. Please see page 34 of the guidance for additional information relating to TSMs.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss any pupils who have become severely absent who do not have an identified plan for improvement. Where time allows, discussion around persistently absent pupils to review what support and intervention has been allocated and consider additional signposting or support to ensure a multi-agency approach.

The Senior Attendance Champion is expected to be present at the scheduled meeting alongside other relevant attendance staff e.g. Attendance Officer/pastoral support officer. Other colleagues are also welcome to join where they have availability to do so, e.g. Senco/DSL. These meetings will require the school to take notes of any recommendations or actions which can then be revisited at the next termly meeting.

The AST will be contacting schools who have attendance below the national average for their phase to arrange a mutually convenient date/time for an initial targeting support meeting.

Other Education Services:

Please see below, links to other education services which you may find useful:

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admissions-and-attendance/admissions>

Written by the Attendance Specialist Team (AST) for schools

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admissions-and-attendance/roll-notifications>

[Education access | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[SEND Contacts | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[Home to school transport | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[Safeguarding | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[Safeguarding contacts | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[Social, emotional and mental health \(SEMH\) | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[SEMH strategy, policies and frameworks | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

<https://youth.essex.gov.uk/schools/>

[Attendance Compliance Team:Contact | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

[The Education Hub – The Education Hub is a site for parents, pupils, education professionals and the media that captures all you need to know about the education system. You'll find accessible, straightforward information on popular topics, Q&As, interviews, case studies, and more. \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

Updated attendance resources and ESI:

Please be advised, the template letters have been revised to reflect the 'support first' notion of the WTTISA guidance. Supporting resources and templates can be found here: [NEW – Attendance template letters and forms and model policy – Effective September 2024 | Essex Schools Infolink](#) please be advised to check this frequently for live updates as additional resources will continue to be made available.

DfE Webinars:

We would encourage all schools to access the DfE resources available on their Sector Comms YouTube channel ([DfE Sector Comms - YouTube](#)). This includes the full package of webinars previously advertised, including the role of the Senior Attendance Champion, an introduction to the new registration codes and sessions around data and the National framework for Penalty Notices.

The Healthy Relationship Team:

The Healthy relationships team have free Reducing Parental Conflict Essex training available, please see the following link for additional details: [RPC September Training Poster.pdf](#)

Team Contacts:

Northeast 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 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



MID: [Click here to join the meeting](#) – Wednesday's - 12-1pm

NORTHEAST [Click here to join the meeting](#) – Tuesday's – 3.30-4.30pm

SOUTH [Click here to join the meeting](#) – Wednesday's – 12.30-1.30pm

WEST [Click here to join the meeting](#) - Thursdays - 12-1pm