

MAXIMISING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BULLETIN

JUNE 2025 – HALF TERM 6

Welcome back, we hope you had a restful May half-term break. This bulletin is a brief update, please remember to check ESI (Essex Schools Infolink) for supporting forms and documents you may find useful.

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Mentoring: Half-term six – It's not too late:

At the recent DfE Attendance Conference in March, Robb Tarn, the DfE attendance tsar, told schools “Schools struggling with their attendance rates can make a difference by focusing efforts on those pupils who nearly always attend”, with almost “half of absence attributed to pupils who miss 15 per cent or less of their sessions”.

This year's focus has almost entirely been around the attendance crisis of pupils who are persistently or severely absent - those missing 10 per cent or 50 per cent or more of their lessons, respectively.

Shifting the focus onto this group of students would “allow your pastoral teams to get under what are the barriers stopping our (most vulnerable) families sending (the most vulnerable) children to our schools”. These are the pupils who could come to school all the time – but only attend NEARLY all the time.

To address this occasional absenteeism, a multifaceted approach is needed, including establishing clear expectations, providing support for individual needs, and fostering a positive school environment. This involves communicating with parents, offering targeted support, and ensuring students understand the importance of regular attendance. However, one of the most under used and yet effective systems of support is that of mentoring.

School staff mentoring students, whether through one-on-one relationships or structured programs, can provide valuable support to students, with improved academic outcomes, increased self-esteem, and better attendance and behaviour, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Mentoring also enhances skills like communication, time management, and problem-solving, preparing students for future education and careers. Additionally, peer mentoring can boost mental health and well-being, fostering empathy and resilience.

Mentoring can be undertaken by teaching, pastoral, or support staff and can also include student to student mentoring support. There are also external agencies that specialise in student mentoring.

Consider developing a mentoring programme during half term 6, focusing on students whose attendance is between 90 and 75%, preparing students who are transitioning to another school phase, or just another year group.

Transition

Hopefully your attendance transition work is now well underway, and you are beginning to build a picture of the new pupils you are expecting to receive in September as well as sharing attendance information with schools where your pupils may be going next academic year.

Remember ALL children experience transition at the end of the academic year and so it is vital the important work schools dedicate to those leaving or arriving also needs to be considered for those staying and moving from year group to year group.

Positive transition = positive attendance, and so those first few weeks in the new academic year are crucial if schools want to maximise the opportunity for good attendance. Pupils in your school who you know struggle to attend following a break must have plans in place to welcome them back in September.

*****Remember** Any child who experiences an absence in the first week of school is 4 times more likely to end the academic year as a PA pupil***

If you want more information on transition planning, please do not hesitate to contact the AST for support and guidance.

Please remember that a model attendance leaflet for schools to share with parents is available on ESI: [Attendance leaflet for parents September 2024](#)

Latest DfE data update:

Headline figures for the latest 3 Months

Date	PRIMARY				SECONDARY				SPECIAL			
	ATTENDANCE		PA		ATTENDANCE		PA		ATTENDANCE		PA	
	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT	ESX	NAT
7.3.25	94.7	94.8	14.4	14.4	91.5	91.9	22.7	22.6	88.8	87.2	31.2	35.6
	0.1		=		0.4		0.1		1.6		4.4	
21.3.25	94.7	94.9	14.0	14.1	91.5	91.8	22.7	22.5	88.9	87.2	32.2	35.5
	0.2		0.1		0.3		0.2		1.7		3.3	
4.4.25	94.7	94.8	13.9	14.1	91.4	91.7	22.9	22.9	88.8	87.1	32.8	35.8
	0.1		0.2		0.3		=		1.7		3.0	
11.4.25	94.7	94.8	13.9	14.1	91.4	91.7	22.7	22.8	88.8	87.1	32.7	35.7
	0.1		0.2		0.3		0.1		1.7		3.0	
2.5.25	94.7	94.8	13.5	13.8	91.5	91.7	22.5	22.7	88.9	87.1	32.4	35.4
	0.1		0.3		0.2		0.2		1.8		3.0	

The
Data

Summary:

During this academic year Essex primary schools have been working hard to improve their individual attendance data against National figures. Whilst the general trend has been that figures remain slightly below the national averages by 0.1% to 0.2%, the hard work of all primary schools across the county has resulted in lower-than-average levels of PA on average when compared to National, from 0.1% increasing to 0.3% in May 25.

Similarly, Essex secondary schools have shown a consistent trend of improved levels of attendance compared to National average, dropping from 0.4% below national average in March 25 to 0.2% in May 25%.

The hard work invested by schools has resulted in both primary and secondary schools improving the attendance percentage rate for the persistently absent pupil group from 0.1% to 0.3% and – 0.1% to 0.2% above national average respectively.

Special schools in Essex continue to outperform the national averages both in overall levels of attendance and lower levels of PA on average.

The AST will continue to work with schools across all phases to maximise attendance in their settings.

For a more detailed breakdown, including details regarding 'reasons for absence' please see here: [Pupil attendance and absence in schools in England](#)

Coding Reminder-Study Leave:

As we approach the exam period, pupils may be given agreed leave to study for public examinations, please see below for further information relating to appropriate use of the S code: The S code should be used where leave has been agreed in advance with a parent (with whom the pupil normally resides) for a pupil to study for a public examination (please note that entrance examinations e.g. 11+ exams, Independent School entrance examinations and mock examinations are not eligible for the use of the S code).

Study leave must not be applied in a blanket approach once the content of the syllabus has been taught for a particular subject. The DfE states that the S code should be used sparingly and where study leave has been granted, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Where a pupil is absent during a public examination, the appropriate absence code must be used.

All year 11 pupils are expected to remain in full time education until the last Friday in June of that academic year:

- Where a school has a sixth form and the pupil is due to transition to year 12, the school may use the X code after the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age (last Friday in June).
- Where schools do not have a sixth form or the pupil is not due to transition into year 12, schools may remove from roll after the last Friday in June has passed.

N.B. Half term 6 data for Year 11s is not included within a school's statistical attendance/absence published data ([Attendance - Coding | Essex Schools Infolink](#))/[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) (Pg 82)

PM Registration and the statutory regulations:

Please ensure that the PM registration period takes place as per the [statutory guidance](#): Chapter 8 of the guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 states the afternoon register must be taken during the afternoon session and identifies this session to be after a "substantial break". Therefore, the PM register must come after a school's "lunch break [that] separates one session from the next". By not adhering to this, DFE/Ofsted may consider schools to be in breach of the statutory guidance, therefore schools are strongly advised to ensure they are following this guidance. Further clarification is available via the DFE webinar from the 3-minute and 26 seconds mark - [DFE Q & A - School attendance register: attendance and absence codes](#).

AST Service offer:

Should a school wish to consult with their AST outside of the standard TSM offer, or a school with attendance above the National for phase require a TSM, a 30-minute slot can be requested via the quadrant's specialist email addresses. It is advised the subject heading should be titled 'Request for 30-minute TSM'. Each quadrant allocates 4 x 30-minute slots every week. Additional information regarding TSMs can be found here: [Targeting Support Meetings \(TSMs\): Overview | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

ACT ISA referral Update:

Please note The Attendance Compliance Team will not accept any new referrals for penalty notices / prosecution, for irregular school attendance patterns, after **Friday 4 July 2025**. This will ensure that all referrals are reviewed and decisions around whether referrals have been accepted / declined or whether further information is required, are communicated with referrers before schools close for the summer.

Please note: for term time holiday absence, a business-as-usual approach will continue to operate until the end of the academic year.

Please see here for further information regarding the ACT consultation booking: [Attendance Compliance Team | Essex Schools Infolink](#)

Dedicated Parent Contact Line: 03330322968

The AST now has a dedicated line for parents to make contact for advice and guidance. The phonenumber enables parents to leave their name and contact number for a call back from one of our Specialists. The phone line is strictly for parents only and is accessed by the team twice weekly. Schools/professionals leaving messages on this line will receive an email as a response to their call and will be advised to send their query via their Team email, please see contact details below:

Team Contacts:

Northeast Team (incl. Clacton, Colchester, Harwich)
neattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk

Mid Team (incl. Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon)
midattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk

South Team (incl. Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford)
southattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk

West Team (incl. Harlow, Epping Forest and Uttlesford)
westattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk

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.

Please visit [the children and young people and families page for more information and links](#)




Early help drop-in sessions

Weekly drop-in sessions - you can attend any session

This session is designed to give partners in Essex who work with children, young people & families the chance 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 Office (TAFFSO)
- Inclusion Partners
- Essex Family Support Service
- Engagement Facilitators
- SENDGASS
- Attendance Specialists
- Essex Youth Service
- Peabody Outreach
- Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service
- DWP
- and others

These sessions **DO NOT** replace work undertaken by the Children & Families Hub as outlined in **Effective Support for Children & Families in Essex**

	North Essex drop-in session Tuesday 11:30-14:30pm Click here to join the meeting
Email (North): C&FPartnershipLeads@essex.gov.uk	
	South Essex drop-in session Wednesday 11:30-13:00pm Click here to join the meeting
Email (South): C&FPartnershipLeads@essex.gov.uk	
	West Essex drop-in session Thursday 11:00-13:00pm Click here to join the meeting
Email (West): C&FPartnershipLeads@essex.gov.uk	
	Mid Essex drop-in session Wednesday 11:00-13:01pm Click here to join the meeting
Email (Mid): C&FPartnershipLeads@essex.gov.uk	

Please note that the Mid Essex has an online booking system, where you are able to pre-book a slot to present a case. Colleagues are still welcome to join the session without booking, but you won't be guaranteed a time to discuss your case.