

## Attendance

Attending school is important to ensure students are able to make the most of their education in order to reach their full potential. If you raise a child's attendance you raise their academic chances. As a parent/carer you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child receives a suitable education. Failure to ensure that your child attends school punctually and regularly may lead to legal action being taken against you. This could result in each parent/carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 for each case or up to 3 months imprisonment. In order to try and avoid this The Thomas Lord Audley School works with students, parents and other agencies to ensure you carry out your legal responsibility of making sure your child attends school. We do this in partnership with Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd. and Essex County Council. As a school, we are concerned when student's attendance drops and we take steps to address issues of attendance with students and/or parents when attendance begins to fall. This can include the following steps:

- **Attendance Text/Call:** If your child does not arrive at school on time and a parent/carer has not called the school's Absence Line (01206 547911 Option 1) to report an absence we will text or call you to check whether your child did/didn't leave for school (to ensure they are safe and to prevent truancy) and/or the reason for their absence. Where relevant we may ask you to bring the child in to school. If we are unable to confirm the child's whereabouts (particularly during prolonged periods of absence) we may contact Social Care or the Police in order to ensure the child is not at risk of harm.
- **Home visit:** On occasions where we are concerned about a student's attendance or welfare (or where we are unable to establish contact with parents) we may carry out a home visit to discuss issues relating to attendance.
- **Request for medical evidence:** Where students are off school frequently due to sickness or medical conditions you may be asked to provide medical evidence. This could be an appointment card, pharmacy label for prescribed medication (stating the child's name and date of dispensing) or a letter from a doctor/consultant/paediatrician. Failure to provide medical evidence will result in the absence being recorded unauthorised.
- **School Attendance Plan (SAP):** If a student is absent from school (either authorised or unauthorised) a student will meet informally with their Assistant Head of House (or another member of the Pastoral team) to discuss their attendance, reasons for their absences, why attending school is important and to agree a support plan to improve their attendance where appropriate.
- **School Based Meeting (SBM):** If no improvement is made following a SAP parent/carer(s) will be asked to attend an 'SBM' to discuss their child's attendance (either authorised or unauthorised), discuss support available to the student or family to address the issues raised and to explain the legal implications if attendance does not improve.
- **Warning letter:** If there is still no improvement following the SBM a warning letter is sent to parents reminding them of the legal implications if attendance does not improve.

- **Penalty Notice and legal action:** This will initially be issuing a penalty notice but could potentially result in legal action where the courts may enforce an Education Supervision Order, Attendance Order or Parenting Order (which would include parents attending parenting skills sessions).

Full details of the legal actions and process (including penalty notices) can be found on the [Essex County Council](#) website.

**Useful websites:**

Essex County Council – Attending School:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/EducationSchools/Schools/Attending-School/Pages/Attending-School.aspx>

Essex County Council – Help getting your child to

school: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/AttendingSchool/Pages/Help-with-getting-your-child-to-go-to-school.aspx>

Essex Safeguarding Children Board – Missing/absent children:

<http://www.escb.co.uk/engb/safeguardingtopics/missingchildren.aspx>

Coram Children's Legal

Centre: [http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=education\\_legal\\_practice](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=education_legal_practice)