



Attendance Support Team

Parent Newsletter (Summer)

Sharing news and updates to parents from the Attendance Support Team

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your families are keeping well. As the Attendance Support Team, we are committed to working in partnership with you to promote regular school attendance and ensure every child has the best opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The Department for Education (DfE) continues to emphasise the critical role of attendance in securing positive educational outcomes. Recent updates from the DfE outline a strengthened approach to attendance, with a focus on early identification of concerns, targeted intervention, and close collaboration between schools, families, and support services.

In this summer edition, we are pleased to share positive attendance outcomes, information on upcoming attendance-focused workshops taking place across the borough, and additional guidance and resources to support consistent school attendance.

We value your continued support and cooperation. If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance or would like further advice, please do not hesitate to contact our team.

Reminder and Expectations

If your child is absent due to illness, please ensure you notify the school **as early as possible** on the first day of absence and provide a clear reason for their non-attendance.

Please be aware that taking your child on holiday during term time **without prior authorisation** places you at risk of receiving a **Fixed Penalty Notice**, in accordance with local authority policy and national attendance regulations.

Each school is assigned a **Borough Education Welfare Officer (BEWO)** who works in partnership with school staff and families to monitor and support school attendance, and to ensure that any concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately. (in first instance speak with school before BEWO).

Penalty Notice Reminder

We would like to make you aware of recent national changes regarding school attendance enforcement. The **Penalty Notice National Framework** came into effect on **19th August 2024** and sets out a consistent approach across all local authorities, including here in Sutton.

Under this new framework, any formal penalty notices issued for unauthorised absences must be supported by accurate and up-to-date documentation that aligns with both national guidance and the **London Borough of Sutton's Code of Conduct**. This includes the information shared with parents through leave request forms, school policies, websites, and warning letters.

Please note the following key changes:

- The **penalty notice fine amount has increased**.
- For a **second offence within a three-year period**, the fine will be a **fixed £160**, with **no option to pay a reduced amount**.
- Any warning letters issued in relation to unauthorised absence will now include full details of the offence under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, along with a reminder that legal proceedings may follow if attendance does not improve.

Family Hubs/Support

Family Hubs aim to make a positive difference to parents, carers and their children by providing a mix of physical and virtual spaces, as well as outreach, where families can access non-judgmental support for the challenges they may be facing.

In Sutton, this means:

- Peer support and practical support across the borough, through regular coffee mornings, for anyone to drop-in to.
- Outreach to places, groups, and people to provide practical support (like help with forms, debt advice, help to access other services)
- Parenting support programmes for anyone to join
- Opportunities to volunteer as a parent/carers or young person
- Four hub spaces, that you can attend to access a range of support
- Problem solving with you at the earliest opportunity, if you are feeling stuck

For further information, please see link: [Family Hubs | Sutton Information Hub](#)

NHS guidance

We would like to remind families of the importance of school attendance and to clarify how it aligns with current NHS health guidance.

We understand that deciding whether your child is well enough to attend school can sometimes be difficult. The NHS provides clear advice to help parents make informed decisions about common illnesses. In many cases—such as mild colds, headaches, or sore throats—children can still attend school safely and benefit from maintaining their routine.

However, if your child has a contagious condition (such as vomiting, diarrhoea, or a high fever), we ask that you follow NHS recommendations and keep them at home until they are well enough to return.

Good attendance is crucial for your child's education, development, and wellbeing. We encourage all parents to consult the official **NHS "Is my child too ill for school?"** guidance when unsure, and to contact the school if you need further advice or support.

For further information, please see link: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

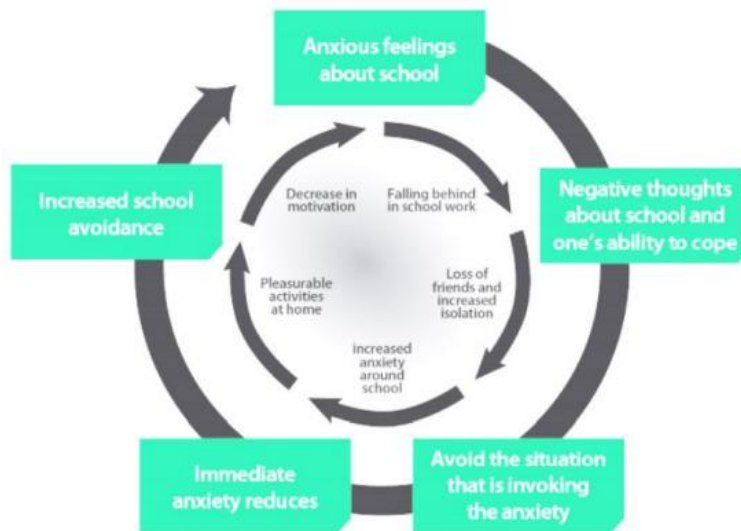
Focus on anxiety

Whilst using the term EBSA can help us and others to know that the absence involves emotional factors, it is essential that further work is undertaken with the pupil and their family to understand what the barriers are for them attending school and

then putting together an appropriate action plan to help them overcome them.

Please see our information from our educational psychology team:

ANXIETY AND AVOIDANCE



Whilst a small amount of anxiety can be helpful (e.g. for enhancing performance before an important event), sometimes anxiety can feel scary, especially when it feels overwhelming and stops us doing things we would usually do.

One of the most common ways of managing anxiety is to avoid a situation which feels scary as this offers immediate relief. However, this is a short-term solution which increases anxiety and makes it even more difficult to face the situation next time – see diagram.

Parents may often spot the warning signs of anxiety first, and therefore responding early to any worries or unhappiness about school is important.

For further information, please click on the link: [Cognus-EBSA-guidance-for-parents-V2.pdf](https://cognus-EBSA-guidance-for-parents-V2.pdf)

For further information or enquiries, please call 0208 323 0461 or email attendance@cognus.org.uk