

Freedom of Information – Response – 26849

I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information.

Time periods requested:

- 1 September 2019–31 August 2020
- 1 September 2020–31 August 2021
- 1 September 2021–31 August 2022
- 1 September 2022–31 August 2023
- 1 September 2023–31 August 2024
- 1 September 2024–31 August 2025
- 1 September 2025–31 December 2025

1. Unauthorised absences

For each of the above school calendar years, please provide:

The total number of unauthorised absences from school which fall under your purview.

Break these figures into:

- ***gender of child.***
- ***ethnicity of child.***
- ***ages e.g. 3-10; 11-16; 17-18.***

The total number of unauthorised absences are recorded at school level and reported to DfE via School Census. This is available here -

[Pupil attendance in schools, Week 49 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

- Scroll down the page and select download data
- Open download file
- Select data
- Select ytd file
- You can then filter by authority (column H)
- Unauthorised Absences can be viewed in column R and % in column AY

Previous releases are also available from this webpage

2. Fines

For each of the above school calendar years, please provide:

The total amount demanded in fines from parents/guardians/carers owing to unauthorised absences from school which fall under your purview.

Break these figures into:

- ***gender of child.***
- ***ethnicity of child.***

Suffolk County Council do not demand fines, there is a process in place where Parents/guardians/carers are given the opportunity to discharge their liability for failing to ensure regular school attendance by paying an out of court fine rather than a legal prosecution.

The number of fines issued during the time periods given above are detailed in the table below. Each fine issued prior to August 2024 was £120 reduced to £60 if payment

received within 21 days. For fines issued after August 2024 the amount per fine is £160. The offer of a reduced rate to £80 is offered to parents/guardians/carers where it is a first fine within a 3-year period and pay within 21 days.

SCC do not record the gender or ethnicity of the child when issuing fines.

b. For each of the above school calendar years, please provide:
The total amount collected in fines from parents/guardians/carers owing to unauthorised absences from school which fall under your purview.

Break these figures into:

- **gender of child.**
- **ethnicity of child.**

SCC do not record the gender or ethnicity of the child when issuing fines.

| | FPNs Issued | income received from penalty notices |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 September 2019–31 August 2020 | 4160 | £190,200 |
| 1 September 2020–31 August 2021 | 1294 | £45,900 |
| 1 September 2021–31 August 2022 | 4255 | £202,380 |
| 1 September 2022–31 August 2023 | 9875 | £484,800 |
| 1 September 2023–31 August 2024 | 11784 | £619,680 |
| 1 September 2024–31 August 2025 | 8289 | £541,720 |
| 1 September 2025-31 December 2025 | 2572 | £148,080 |

3. Appeals

For each of the above school calendar years, please provide:

a. The total number of parents/guardians/carers who appealed their fine.
 Break this down into the ethnicity of parent/guardian/carer if you do collect it in this way.
 There is no statutory right of appeal once a fixed penalty notice has been issued, however parents/guardians/carers can make representation to the school if they feel the absences have been incorrectly coded as unauthorised.

Suffolk County Council does not record these school communications.

b. The total number of parents/guardians/carers who **successfully appealed** their fine.
 Break this down into the ethnicity of parent/guardian/carer if you do collect it in this way.
 n/a

Please ensure that the data is anonymised. So, for example, if the numbers are fewer than 5, simply state <5.

c. *Please explain where the money collected goes and for what it is used.*

Prior to September 2024 the revenue collected from Fixed penalty notices was only to cover the cost of issuing Penalty Notices and of Prosecuting parents/guardians/carers who fail to pay the penalties. Any surplus monies paid to Secretary of State.

The new statutory guidance which came into force from 19th August 2024 states

‘Any revenues collected through the system must be ring-fenced for attendance. Monies collected should first be used for administration of the penalty notice system and prosecution. Any surplus left after this should be spent on attendance support. In practice, support means any other activity to improve attendance short of a penalty notice or prosecution in line with this guidance. This revenue should not be considered part of wider local authority funding and relied upon to fund the core attendance expectations of the local authority or be pooled in wider legal services budgets or allocated outside the local authority’s attendance functions. Any remaining surplus at the end of the year must be paid to the Secretary of State.’