

Freedom of Information – Response – 26945

Please provide data for the three most recent full academic year for which you hold records, relating to school attendance enforcement.

1. Penalty notices (fines)

Please provide:

a) The total number of penalty notices issued for school attendance offences.

b) The number of individual parents who received:

exactly one penalty notice, exactly two penalty notices, three or more penalty notices

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total PNs issued	9870	11785	8148
number of ind. Parents issued 1	5257	5987	4335
number of ind. Parents issued 2	1813	2200	1461
number of ind. Parents issued 3 or more	296	419	269

2. Escalation to prosecution

Please provide:

a) The number of parents whose case was escalated to prosecution under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

Of the penalty notices issued within the years detailed above the number of parents escalated to prosecution was :

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
136	94	179

b) The number of parents who were eligible for prosecution (e.g., unpaid penalty notice or continued unauthorised absence) but whose case did not proceed, and the reasons recorded.

Of the penalty notices issued within the years detailed above the number of parents eligible for prosecution who case did not proceed to court were:

2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
950	983	557

Decisions about whether to pursue legal action are made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors and only if the following two tests are met;

1. Evidential test – the evidence must be:
 Clear, reliable and admissible in court; and
 Strong enough for a realistic chance of prosecution
2. Public Interest test – whether it is in the public interest to take the case to court

Where the case does not meet the requirements of the Code for Crown Prosecutors it is withdrawn

c) The number of parents who were pending prosecution at the end of each academic year.

Suffolk County Council (SCC) do not record the status of each penalty notice at the end of the academic year. Details of the decisions made for each penalty notice issued during the specified academic years have been given, although the outcomes of prosecuted or withdrawn may have occurred outside of the academic year in which they were issued.

Further information can be gathered from the parental responsibility measures DfE release [Parental responsibility measures, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

- Select zip file Download all data
- Open downloaded file
- Select data file – this will open a spreadsheet – you can filter the spreadsheet by LA.
- Column AA gives the number of unresolved penalty notices at the end of the academic year although this is not broken down by individual parent

Please confirm:

a) Whether the local authority maintains an internal record of repeat penalty notice recipients.

Prior to 19 August 2024, SCC did not keep internal records identifying repeat recipients of Penalty Notices. On that date, the National Framework for School Fixed Penalty Notices was introduced, requiring an escalation process for repeat recipients. SCC now maintains internal records to ensure the three-year escalation process can be applied consistently.

b) Whether you hold any internal guidance or policy documents on escalation thresholds (e.g., when a second or third fine triggers legal action). If so, please provide these documents.

SCC are currently updating our Enforcement Policy, so it is not available to share at this time. However, the prosecution decision process outlined in response 2b explains how decisions are made in each case about whether a prosecution should proceed.