

Parental rights

You have the right in law to Electively Educate your child as an alternative to enrolling your child into a school. However, you are obligated, in law, to satisfy the LA that a suitable education is taking place. You will need to provide evidence demonstrating that the elective home education provision is in place and is an efficient full-time education, suitable to your child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have.

If you do not wish to enroll your child into the named school, you are required in law to source an alternative school of your choosing and provide the name of this school to the LA.

Non-compliance of a SAO

The SAO process will be followed, within the lawful national required timeframes.

If the SAO8&9 (Final Notice) have been issued and parents have not yet provided evidence of suitable education or registered their child at a school, contrary to section 443 of Education Act 1996: Failure to comply with the requirements of the SAO, then the Local Authority may start legal proceedings.

The maximum penalty charged is £1000.00 for each parent and for each child subject to the Order.

The maximum penalty chargeable is due to rise from £1000.00 for each parent, for each child, to £2,500.00 plus a maximum of three month's imprisonment.

Contact Details: Children Missing Education,
Children & Young Peoples Services,
Suffolk County Council,
Endeavour House,
Ipswich IP1 2BX

Telephone: 01473 265224
Email: CME@suffolk.gov.uk



School Attendance Order (SAO)

INFORMATION LEAFLET



Advice for parents/carers

Children and Young People's Services

A School Attendance Order (SAO) is a legal process to ensure that a parent provides a full-time, suitable education for their statutory school aged child.

The Education Act 1996 s.437 states that if it appears to a local authority (LA) that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent.

The parent is then required to satisfy them within 15 days of the notice that the child is receiving such education either by providing evidence of suitable 'education otherwise' e.g. by home education or by making a school application. Evidence of home education should be emailed to the Elective Home Education (EHE) team at ehe@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 01473 265139, (EHE team general No.).

If a parent fails to provide this evidence, the LA, Suffolk County Council (SCC), may start the SAO process.

What is the SAO process?

The SAO process consists of a series of letters which will result in a school being selected and named by the LA. To comply with the order, you will need to ensure your child is registered at the school by completing the school admissions paperwork for the named school.

The selected or 'named' school will not necessarily be the nearest school to your home address and may not be the school which you prefer, it will be a suitable school with places available in your child's Year group. Eligibility for home-to-school travel will be subject to SCC regulations. To check transport eligibility please visit www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child arrives at school at the correct time and returns home safely at the end of the school day.

Letters and timescales included in the SAO Process

SAO1	Notice to Satisfy. Issued to parents, giving 15 days to respond with evidence of suitable education or apply for school of their choice.
SAO2&2A	Consultation with school/s and their Trust or Governing body to ensure suitable place available for children. The SAO2 (Consult letter) & SAO2A (Intention to Name) are issued to school/s giving 15 calendar days to respond with any reasons why it is not appropriate for their school to be named in the Order.
SAO3	Informs parents of the intended school to be named in the Order. After considering any response to letters SAO2&2A, the LA will identify a school to be named in the Order and inform the parents by way of the SAO3. Parents have 7 calendar days to contact the named school and make arrangements for their child's school admission.
SAO4	The SAO4 is sent in place of the SAO3 where the child subject to the Order has an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP).
SAO5&6	This is the legal Order issued to parents informing them of the requirement to register their child at the named school. If this is not actioned by the parent within 15 days, the SAO8 Final Notice & SAO9 accompanying letter will be issued. Parents may submit their EHE evidence to ehe@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 01473 265139.
SAO8&9	Final Notice to Parents. Parents are given a final 15 calendar day period to produce evidence to the LA that suitable education is being provided for their child.