

Press Release

Communications PO Box 11, Chelmsford CM1 1LX

7 February 2013

School Absences – Fraud Alert

Essex County Council is warning parents and schools to be aware of a fraud scam around unauthorised absences.

The Counter Fraud Team at Essex County Council were alerted today (7th February) of a parent of a pupil at an Essex school who received a phone call purporting to be from the Education Welfare Service stating that their child had not attended school that day and as a result they had to pay a fine of £340. The parent was asked to provide her credit/debit card details so that a payment could be made over the phone.

The Education Welfare Service do not phone parents demanding payment immediately over the phone. Invoices and penalty notices are sent via the post by the Education Welfare Service and parents are then given the option to pay by phone.

Although payments can be accepted over the phone, at no time would the Education Welfare Service phone a parent demanding payment immediately over the phone.

Any parent who receives such calls should inform their school and the Essex County Council's Trading Standards team on 0845 404 0506.

ENDS

For more information contact Jessica Cammack on 01245 437719 or jessica.cammack@essex.gov.uk.