



School Attendance Matters **A parent's guide to good attendance**

Why is regular school attendance so important for my child?

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education, improving their chances in adult life. School can also help your child's social skills such as making and developing friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

The link between attendance and attainment in school is clear. The more a pupil is in the school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Punctuality

The school, by law has to take a register of pupils first thing in the morning and at some point in the afternoon. If a pupil is late but the register is still open they are marked as late. If a pupil arrives late and the register is closed, without a satisfactory explanation, it may be classed as an unauthorised absence. This may lead to legal action for not ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.

For example, if a child arrives at school 15 minutes late each day they lose almost 2 weeks of education a year!

Leave of Absence during term time

Holidays during term time will not be authorised. Any leave of absence during term time will **not be authorised** unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you do consider a leave of absence in term time please take note of the following:

- A written request must be submitted by the Parent/Carer in advance to the Head-Teacher who will send a written response. Any unauthorised leave of absence may result in a Penalty Notice of up to £120 per parent. Fines can be followed up by prosecution if attendance does not improve.

How can I help my child attend school regularly?

- Talk to your child about school
- Take a positive interest in your child's work, including homework
- Make use of your child's school planner
- Keep in touch with school staff
- Contact school every day your child is absent
- Attend Parents' Evening and other school events

What should I do if I'm worried about my child's school attendance?

The first thing to do is contact the school to discuss your concerns. There are a number of school staff that are able to help to resolve problems and concerns. Please contact the Attendance Team or Progress Leader in the first instance.

What are my responsibilities regarding my child's school attendance?

As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that any child of compulsory school age attends school both regularly and on time. The local Authority has a duty to make sure that all parents/carers fulfil this responsibility.

What will happen if my child does not attend school regularly?

The school will contact you in the first instance to raise concerns about your child's attendance. You will be offered the support of the Attendance Team to address any concerns you have over your child's school attendance. You will receive letters updating you on your child's attendance and punctuality, phone-calls will be made to discuss any concerns and home visits may also be carried out.

What if my child's school attendance does not improve?

If you continue to fail in your responsibility you may:

- Receive a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served. The fine can be issued for truancy, holidays in term time or poor attendance/punctuality. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in further statutory action being taken against you.
- Be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per responsible adult or up to 3 months imprisonment.

How will regular school attendance help my child?

School gives your child a wide range of opportunities and experiences in the form of academic lessons, educational trips and school clubs allowing them to develop their interests and achieve their full potential. Regular school attendance means that your child can make the most of their education.

How can the Attendance Team help?

- Advise you on your rights and responsibilities regarding school attendance
- Visit you and your child in your home to discuss difficulties
- Liaise with school staff on your behalf
- Meet with you and your child in school
- Accompany you to meetings in school or at other agencies
- Suggest other agencies that may be able to help
- Provide information about school admissions/transfers
- Provide further information on the consequences of irregular school attendance