

Every Lesson Counts

A guide to school attendance

Every child has the right to receive full time education

- Children can only make the most of educational opportunities if they attend regularly and on time.
- Lessons lost will never be found.
- 95% attendance or below is a cause for concern.
- It is not a parental right to take a child out of school for a holiday.

What does the school do?

Provides 190 days of planned curriculum delivery – not a day should be missed.

Listens and supports

Liaises with the Education Welfare Officer

Reports levels of school attendance to:

- The Local Authority
- The Department of Education and Skills
- Ofsted

Monitors attendance

Reports a child's attendance, at least annually, to parents

Informs parents of their child's unacceptable absence and:

- Invites parents to a meeting to discuss the issue
- Alerts the EWO to unacceptable patterns of absence where home/school contact has not improved the attendance

The following reasons for absence will not be authorised

- Looking after the house
- Looking after other family members
- Illness of another family member, i.e. pupil kept off school when sibling unwell
- Shopping during school hours
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Holidays

Most common acceptable reasons for absence

- ✓ Illness of child (not the parent)
- ✓ An emergency medical or dental appointment that has not been possible in out of school hours
- ✓ A religious event

Anyone wishing to take their child out of school on compassionate grounds should write to the school, requesting permission and explaining the situation.

Parental Responsibility

Education Act 1996, Part V1, Chapter 11, Section 444

1. *If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to regularly attend the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.*

In a few cases where a child persistently misses school and parents are aware of the situation but have been unable to provide a reasonable explanation to the school for the absence, the parents may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

What if???

Your child misses 10 days of school (20 sessions)

- They already have a 95% attendance

Your child misses 20 days of school (40 sessions)

- That's only 89% attendance – the equivalent of half a day off per week for a whole year.

Your child misses 38 days of school (76 sessions)

- That's 80% attendance – the equivalent of a day off a week for the whole year

What if your child is late?

- He/she might feel self conscious and humiliated.
- He/she misses registration which may result in an absent mark; this would be an unauthorised absence.
- He/she misses the beginning of lessons which contain the introduction to the work from the teacher.
- He/she will be 'catching up' for the rest of the lesson.
- He/she misses the social part of the beginning of the day.
- He/she may be reluctant or refuse to enter the classroom.
- He/she will cause disruption for all other class members.

What does the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) do?

- Monitors attendance
- Works with the school and parents to resolve a child's attendance problems
- Telephones, writes or visits your home when necessary

What can you do to help?

- Report the absence of your child as early as possible on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that your child is in school for registration – don't let him/her miss out on the first part of the day.
- Arrange a meeting after school if you need to speak to the class teacher.
- Do not take holidays during term time.
- Understand that the beginnings and ends of terms are as important as any other time in school.
- Do not allow your child time away from school unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Encourage a pattern of punctuality and good attendance with your child – let him/her see it matters.
- When one of your children is off school make sure that you get the others into school – ask a friend to take them in and check to ensure arrival at school.
- Take notice of how much time your child has been away from school.
- Let us know if you are about to leave the area, change your address or any of your contact numbers. Ensure that we always have up-to-date contact information.

BE CONCERNED OVER YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE