



A Quick Reference Guide to Attendance for Parents/Carers

Why is good attendance so important?

Excellent attendance goes hand-in-hand with achievement, and is essential for future success and securing good outcomes.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and develop social skills.
- Develop essential life skills.
- Engage successfully in essential learning and other school events.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

We recognise that, for each child's learning and progress to be maximised, and for their happiness to be assured, school and home must form a close, supportive and effective partnership.

We ask that all parents/carers promote excellent attendance and work in partnership with school to provide a consistent approach.

What does the law say about attendance at school?

All children of compulsory school age, between 5-16, must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent/carer, you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child misses school without you knowing – legal action can be taken against you by the Local Authority. It is a legal offence to fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.

What time does the school day start for my child?

Current start times for each year group are outlined below:

Year Group	Period 1 Start Time
7	8:40
8	8:55
9	8:45
10	8:50
11	8:35

What should I do if my child is unable to attend school for a genuine reason?

If your child is prevented, for any reason, from attending, or is late, it is essential that you notify the attendance office as soon as possible, on the first day of absence: 0191 4833199 (Option 1.) This contact is regarded as an essential safeguarding procedure. You should give details of your child, reason for absence and the expected date of return.

What should I do on the second day of absence, and thereafter?

For safeguarding reasons, we ask that parents/carers continue to contact school at the start of each new day of absence. This can be done via text or the MCAS app, as well as by phone.

What will school do if I fail to notify them of my child's absence?

In order to ensure your child's safety, we will:

- Day 1 (am) - The Attendance Office will send a text. Please reply with your reason for absence.
- Day 1 (pm) - School will send another text. Please reply with your reason for absence.
- Day 2 – Your child's Intervention Manager will contact you by telephone. Please answer immediately and confirm the reason for your child's absence.
- Day 3 - If we still do not have a reason for absence by Day 3, a home visit will be made, to ensure your child is safe.

Important note: if the home visit is unsuccessful, the school's safeguarding procedures will be implemented.

It is imperative that parents/carers:

- Provide accurate, up-to-date contact details.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Update school without delay, if their contact details change. Parents and carers can update their contact details via the *My Child At School App*.

What if my child has a medical or dental appointment?

As far as possible, you should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the attendance office.

If the appointment requires your son/daughter to leave during the school day, they must be signed out at the reception by a parent/carer, unless other arrangements have been agreed in advance.

Important: your child **must** attend school *before* and *after* the appointment, unless there are medical reasons why this cannot happen.

What if my child is off school regularly due to medical reasons?

We will always endeavour to work with families and support pupils with genuine medical needs; however, if there is cause for concern about the veracity of an illness, the school can request that parents/carers provide medical evidence.

Schools can record absences as 'unauthorised' if not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness. Medical evidence could take the form of prescriptions and/or medical appointment cards.

Can I request a 'Leave of Absence' for my child?

You should be aware that any absence from school, for whatever reason, will potentially have a detrimental effect on your child's learning and progress. For this reason, authorisation will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.

Can I request a holiday during term time?

Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as set out by the Local Authority.

Leave during term time will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**, for example bereavement or serious illness. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis.

If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice. (See the Local Authority Code for Penalty Notices, at the end of this document, for further information.)

How can I find out my child's attendance percentage?

Your child's attendance data can be accessed through the *My Child At School* App. Alternatively, you can contact your child's Intervention Manager, for attendance information.

What will happen if my child's attendance falls below the school target of 95%?

If your child's attendance drops below 95%, their Intervention Manager will speak with them privately to discuss any potential issues or problems, in order to ascertain how the school can help them to improve their attendance and reach the school target. Intervention Managers will make a phone call home and intervention referrals will be made, where necessary.

If your child's attendance drops below 93%, a letter will be sent to you, raising concerns about your child's attendance and requesting medical evidence for the absence. A monitoring period of 4 weeks will commence and attendance is expected to improve. There will be close communication with home throughout this time, by phone call or in the form of meetings.

If your child's attendance drops to 90% or lower, a letter will be sent home outlining our serious concerns, as your child has now become PA (Persistent Absentee). An Attendance Officer will contact you to arrange a meeting in school.

If attendance does not improve, following a short monitoring period of two weeks, one of two things will happen:

- You will either be invited to attend an Attendance Review with an Attendance Officer and your child's Head of Learning and/or Head of Key Stage (and potentially other professionals, such as the School Nurse, as deemed appropriate.)
- Or, a Stage 2 meeting will be scheduled with a representative from the LA and school. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance, which will be monitored over a further two week period.

Monitoring and communication with the family will continue until attendance stabilizes. If targets are not met, the school will have no option but to make a referral for a Penalty Notice Warning, which could escalate to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

What is an Attendance Clinic and will I be asked to attend one?

Attendance Clinics will be used to address concerns around attendance. If your child is a good attender, you will not be invited to an Attendance Clinic.

An attendance clinic is an attendance meeting, held periodically throughout the year, in which representatives from the Local Authority will meet with you and your child about the concerns around their attendance. These clinics could take place in school, or at The Town Hall.

What happens if my child continues to have issues with attendance, despite the processes followed and the support offered by school?

If your child continues to have poor attendance, legal action can be taken against you by the Local Authority. It is a legal offence to fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Legal action can involve a Penalty Notice or being taken to court.

How much does a Penalty Notice cost?

A Penalty Notice is raised at the rate of £120.00 per 'parent', for each child of the family that meets the criteria. Payment is required within 28 days of issue. Notices paid within the first 21 days of issue are discounted to £60.00. Notices cannot be paid in instalments. Failure to pay a penalty notice will usually lead to prosecution.

Parents/carers could potentially face Parenting Orders and in serious cases, there is a risk of potential imprisonment.

What should I do if I am struggling to get my child in to school?

Contact your child's Head of Learning as a matter of urgency and be open and honest about your concerns. ***We will do everything within our power to support you and your child.***