



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	Start Time (Registration)
7	8:40
8	8:40
9	8:40

10	8:40
11	8:40

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 the reason for your child's absence.
- Day 1 (pm) - School will send another text. Please reply with the reason for your child's 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 will request that parents/carers provide medical evidence.

School reserves the right to 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.

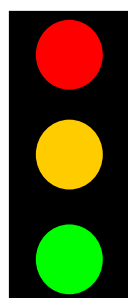
If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions such as a penalty notice. (See the Local Authority Code for Penalty Notices, at the end of this document, for further information.)

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?

We will monitor your child's attendance using the following traffic light system as a benchmark:



Red – Danger Zone - **Below 91%**

Amber – At Risk Zone – **92% - 96%**

Green Zone – Safety Zone – **97% and Above**

There are four stages to our monitoring process, which are intended to improve pupil attendance levels and maximise learning potential. We endeavour to give our pupils the very best start in life and have high standards in relation to expectations about attendance and punctuality.

Stage 1 – If there are emerging concerns about attendance, a letter will be sent out reminding parents/carers of the importance of good attendance.

Stage 2 – If no improvement is made following Stage 1 and there is additional absence, which causes further concern, another letter will be sent home. This letter will include a parent survey, requesting more information regarding the barriers to your child attending school, so that we can identify ways to support your child and put appropriate intervention in place. Medical evidence will be requested at this stage and we would encourage parents/carers to arrange to speak to school about any concerns they may have in relation to their child's attendance.

Stage 3 – Pupils continue to show little, or no improvement and attendance has deteriorated even further. A letter will be sent home advising that the pupil will be placed on a four week monitoring period. During this monitoring period, 100% attendance is required, unless medical evidence can be provided.

Stage 4 – Pupils who are absent within the four week time frame, and who, therefore, do not pass the four week monitoring period, will be moved to Stage 4 and considered for referral to the local authority.

Our aim is for our pupils to have excellent attendance and punctuality and we ask for the co-operation of parents/carers with this matter.

<p>Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year</p> <p>Pupils in this group will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will get into the habit of good attendance, helping to prepare them for the world of work.</p>
<p>95%: 10 days absence a year</p> <p>Pupils in this group are likely to reach their target grades and form a habit of attending school regularly.</p>
<p>92%: 15 days absence a year</p> <p>Pupils in this group are missing three weeks of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their target grades. The school may consider referring pupils with this level of attendance to the Local Authority.</p>
<p>90% or below: 19 days (or more) absence a year</p> <p>The Government categorise pupils in this group as 'Persistent Absentees'. It will be almost impossible for these pupils to keep up with their school work, due to gaps in learning caused by absence. Parents/carers of pupils in this group could face the possibility of legal action from the Local Authority.</p>

Will I be invited to a meeting about my child's attendance?

Where there are concerns, you could be invited to attend an Attendance Review with an Attendance Officer and/or your child's Head of Learning and/or Head of Key Stage (and potentially other professionals, such as the School Nurse, as deemed appropriate.)

Alternatively, a LA Stage 2 meeting could be scheduled with a representative from the Local Authority and school. Provision will be discussed and targets will be set for raising attendance, which will be monitored over a fixed period.

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.***