



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	8:30
8	8:30
9	8:30
10	8:30
11	8:30

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) - We will send a text. Please reply with your reason for absence.
- Day 1 (pm) - We 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, which could include a request for a police welfare check.

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*, or by contacting the main office.

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 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, photographs of prescribed medications and/or screenshots of appointments.

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?

The current legislation does not give entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers cannot authorize absence from school for a family holiday.

The Government states that schools are not able to authorise holidays during term time and any unauthorised absence, including for holidays, will result in a Penalty Notice referral, as to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

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 may request medical evidence for the absence. If attendance does not improve, we may place students on a 4-week monitoring period. There will be close communication with home throughout this time, by a 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 3 meeting will be scheduled with a representative from the Local Authority and school. Provision will be discussed, and targets will be set to raise attendance and will be monitored.

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 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?

THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024 No. 210.

New legislation came into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance as summarised below:



Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.	10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.	
First Offence The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.	Second Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.	Third Offence (within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. This is a criminal offence and a parent may end up with a criminal record.

What should I do if I am struggling to get my child into 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.***