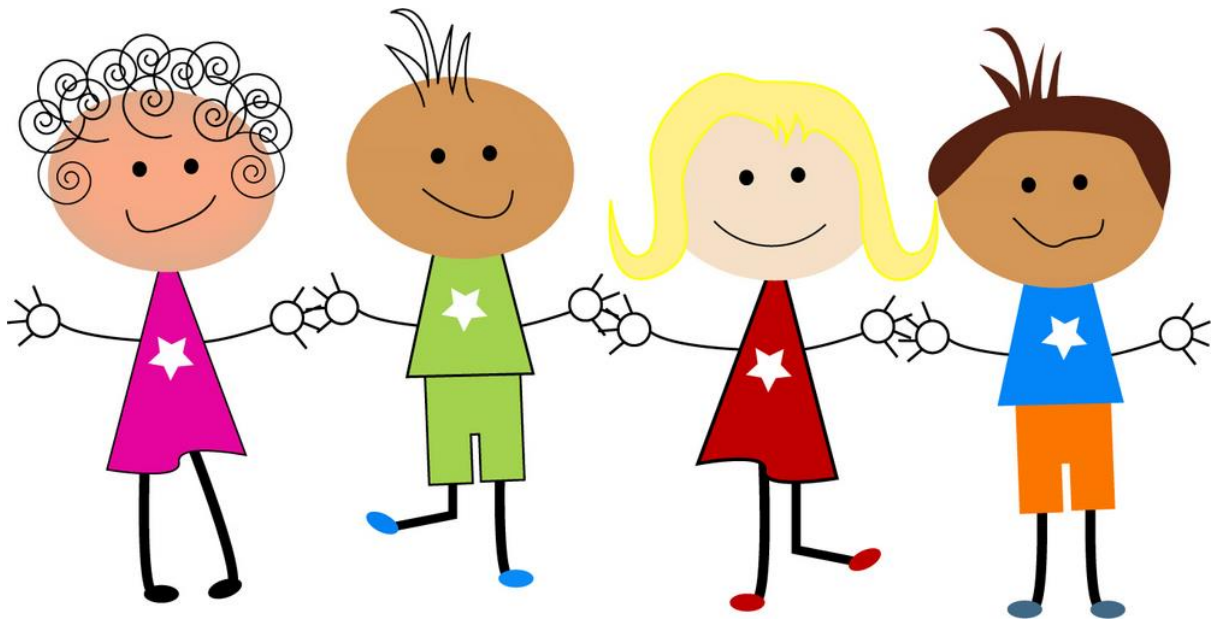


School Attendance

A Guide for Parents and Carers



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Did you know?

The law says that parents and carers must make sure their children receive a suitable and full-time education. Most parents and carers do this by registering their children at a school and making sure they attend regularly.

Parents of compulsory school age children, (a child becomes compulsory school age the term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of Year 11), have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable education. If a child is registered at a school, parents / carers have the **legal responsibility** for ensuring that their child attends regularly, Department for Education (2012).

If your children are absent from school without a good reason, you may receive a Penalty Notice or be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Every school day counts towards your child's future, days off school add up to lost learning.

In total there are 175 non-school days a year. This gives families the opportunity to:

- Spend time together
- Go on family visits
- Go on holiday
- Go shopping
- Go on days' out
- Attend routine appointments

Why is going to school regularly so important?

- Children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve good results. Children who are absent without good reason are 12 times more likely to leave school without any qualifications.
- If a child misses just 1 day per week, over the course of their school career they will miss two years of schooling.
- Young people with good attendance will find work more easily when they leave school.

- Young people who truant are three times more likely to break the law.
- Children who do not attend school are more likely to be victims of crime or be at risk from other types of harm. If your children are not attending school, you may not know where they are or even if they are safe. Their teachers will not know either.

Absence

Holidays

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS ARE NOT A RIGHT

Many parents and carers think it is okay to go on holiday during term time, but this has a negative effect on your children's learning and ability to achieve. If your child goes on holiday during term time they are **absent**.

Your child's Head Teacher will only authorise a holiday **if the circumstances are exceptional**.

If you take your child out of school during term time the Head Teacher may issue you with a Fixed Penalty Notice, these are issued per parent, per child. This means that if you have 2 children both parents / carers will receive 2 fines each.

Poor Punctuality

If your child is frequently late to school, they are missing vital learning. Arriving late can also be very embarrassing for your child.

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

If your child is frequently late to school you may be called in for a meeting with the Head Teacher. If your child continues to be late you may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Illness

As a parent/carer of a child you are responsible for assessing whether your child is too ill to go to school. However, you should not keep your child off school unnecessarily.

REMEMBER, if you are ever unsure either discuss with the school or send the child into school anyway. If your child is unwell during school time the school will telephone you to come and collect them.

Schools have the right to ask for medical evidence for all sickness and medical appointments. As a parent / carer you are responsible for providing this, if you fail to provide evidence, then the absence may be unauthorised.

If you have regular unauthorised absence or illness without any medical evidence you may be called in for a meeting with the Head Teacher and referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

What can parents and carers do to encourage school attendance?

- Encourage your child to come to school. School is fun, exciting and they get to see and spend time with their friends.
- Give yourself and your child plenty of time in the morning and stick to the same routine.
- Make sure your child arrives punctually at school every day.
- Make sure your child is dressed correctly and has the proper equipment.
- Make sure your child goes to bed at a reasonable time.
- Don't allow your child to take their electronic devices (mobile phones/iPad/Kindle) to bed. The "blue light" on these devices mimics sunlight confusing our brains into thinking it is not time to go to sleep. This in turn causes your child's brain to be stimulated and they struggle to sleep.

- Contact the school first thing in the morning if your child is unwell and keep school informed as to the progress of the illness.
- Try to arrange medical appointments at the beginning or end of the day so that your child can attend school beforehand or afterwards. Dental appointments should be after the school day or during the holidays, except in an emergency.
- Let the school know if you change your address and/or telephone number.
- Show an interest in what your child does in school each day and encourage them to do any homework that is set.
- If you think your child is trying to avoid going to school speak to a member of the school staff. If you are really concerned you can ask the school to put you in contact with your Education Welfare Officer. The longer you leave things, the harder it will be to return your child to school.

What does the Education Attendance Service do?

The Education Attendance Service supports parents and carers in making sure their children go to school regularly.

Education Welfare Officers can liaise with schools and other agencies and, together with parents, look for ways of improving school attendance if it becomes a problem.

If you would like to speak to me, please contact your child's school.