

### **What does the law say?**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

**Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly - even if they miss school without you knowing - the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.**

The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities. Parents are responsible for making sure that their registered children regularly attend school or any alternative provision arranged for them.

If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school. If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible. Reasons such as family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observance would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include shopping and birthdays.

### **What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?**

Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court. The LA may decide to prosecute a parent. If this happens: ***Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or be imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.***

***Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.***

## **ATTENDANCE MATTERS!**



## **EVERY SECOND COUNTS!**

**Why it's so important  
your child is at  
school....**

## Why Does Attendance Matter?

Attending School on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good routines for later life and the working world, as well as giving your child the opportunity to:

- Make lots of friends and feel included.
- Learn new things and develop many skills.
- Increase confidence and self esteem.
- Improve social skills.
- Achieve potential and fulfil aspirations.

100% attendance = attending school every day.

90% attendance = attending 4½ days a week.  
= 4 weeks missed per year.

80% attendance = attending 4 days a week.  
= more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career.

70% attendance = attending 3½ days each week.  
= more than a quarter of the school year missed.

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school.

### Arriving Late for School

When a child arrives late to school it can be very disruptive to your child, the teacher and other children in the class. If your child arrives between 9.00 am and 9.15 am they will be marked as late on the register, if your child arrives after 9.15 am they will be marked late after the register has closed which would be an **Unauthorised Absence**.

### Being late for school reduces learning time:

- If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year.
- If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year.

## Make every minute count

## When Your Child is Absent

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given.

Only the Senior/Head of School can officially authorise an absence, but unless there is a concern, the staff will usually do this on his behalf. Parents should provide reasons for absences and the school must decide whether or not they justify authorisation according to Government Guidelines.

### Authorised Absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil.
- Hospital/dental appointment for the pupil.
- Death of a near relative.
- Religious observance (faith of the parents/carers).

### Unauthorised Absences:

- A shopping trip.
- A birthday treat.
- Oversleeping due to a late night.
- Looking after other children.
- Letting the gas man in, etc.

### Whenever a child is absent from school the parent should:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If no notification of absence is received, the school office will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Where possible let the school know in advance of any planned absences eg hospital appointments.
- Where possible make medical/dental appointments out of school hours.

### Term Time Leave:

The Head of School is only allowed to grant a leave of absence during term time in "exceptional circumstances". Applications must be made in advance using a 'request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional Circumstances' form. The Head of School must be satisfied by the evidence which is presented that the circumstances are "exceptional", before authorising term-time leave. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. In granting a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, the Head of School will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head of School their absence will be deemed as unauthorised and could lead to sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecution.