



# The Importance of School Attendance

2018/2019

## What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. **Once your child is registered at our school, you are responsible for making sure he or she attends every day and on time. 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/carers fulfil their responsibilities, and the school must tell the LA if your child is regularly absent from school. As a parent/carer, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. You run the risk of being prosecuted by the LA if your child's attendance is poor; parents/carers can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

At our school, we work with you in partnership to ensure that this does not happen. We have a policy on attendance that you can find on our website, and strongly encourage you to speak to your child's class teacher or appropriate senior leader if you are having difficulties with getting your child to school on time.

## School times

Our school day starts at 8:45am for EYFS and KS1. Our school day starts at 9am for KS2. Lessons begin at 9:00am and the school teaching day finishes at 3.05pm for EYFS and KS1 and 3:15pm for KS2.

Parents/carers arriving late, after the gates shut at 9am, need to register their child at the main reception as soon as they arrive in the building. A member of staff will take your child to their class.

## Lateness and Lost Minutes of Learning

Did you know that being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school over the year. Lateness is just as serious as non-attendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning. Children who are consistently late will struggle to keep up with work, miss out on the social aspect of the morning routine and struggle to make and keep friendships. We start teaching at 9am and 'late' children miss out on vital skills such as phonics and/or basic number work.

## Illness

There may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. Please notify us of this on the first day (and every subsequent day) of absence. If there are patterns of sickness, we will work with your child, you and your health professionals to try and resolve these issues. Children may be offered medical or dental appointments in school time. Please ensure that routine appointments such as dental check-ups are made during the school holidays or after school hours. If you need to request an emergency medical absence, evidence of this appointment needs to be submitted to the school reception team or the appointment will be coded as unauthorised.

Please call the school each day of your child's illness. Appropriate senior leaders are also available on before and after school hours.

## Absences during term time

Excellent attendance is very important to us at school and research shows that children that have attendance that is 97% and above are high achievers in school. As of September 2013 the law changed regarding attendance and the appropriate senior leaders can no longer give permission for holidays during term time. Absences during term time can only be authorised if they are taken due to exceptional circumstances. You will only be able to make a formal holiday request by submitting this in writing to the appropriate senior leader explaining your exceptional circumstances. Leave for exceptional circumstance can be for no longer than 5 school days.

Every case will be considered individually and there are no set criteria defining 'exceptional circumstances'. The law dictates that each child's current attendance figure and attendance pattern will be considered in each case. The law now says that if you do take unauthorised holiday it may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. This fine will be £60 per child and adult but would increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. There is a possibility that further prosecution could result from the local authority.

Please book your holidays during the 175 days of school holidays.

We have always tried to keep you informed about your child's attendance and explain why good attendance is vital to support the education and social development of your child. Therefore we hope this letter is informative, however the full guidance can be discussed with an appropriate senior leader.

## Did You Know...? By the end of the academic year

For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%. Ten whole days of school has been missed if your child has 95% attendance. This is considered **persistently absent**.

Twenty whole days of school has been missed if a pupil's attendance is 90%.

By the time a pupil's attendance falls to 85% they have missed 6 weeks or half a term of schooling.

## Is there a proven link between attendance and children's achievement in school?

**Yes.** There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. In primary schools, less than 65% of children get good results in Maths and English in schools when they have an average of 15 days absence, compared to around 90% in schools where the average is less than 8 days. Many parents are surprised how quickly their children accumulate 15 days absence - we will send you a termly letter letting you know what your child's absence has been for the term; as well as ensuring your child's attendance is discussed at parent's meetings.

Of the children who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only 3% manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C. 73% of children who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C. While GCSEs may seem some time away, setting good attendance and punctuality patterns from an early age, from nursery and Reception through to Year 6, will really help.

### What can you do to help?

Make sure your child arrives at school on time every day or preferably early, our doors open at 8.45am and there are lots of learning activities on offer for your child to access. Take an interest in what is happening for your child in school. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school. If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as early as possible. Follow the school's procedures for notifying absence, and always let the school know of any days that your child is unable to attend.

If you suspect that your child may be missing school or is unhappy at school, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can work with you to resolve any difficulties.

Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school and be on the alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as friendship issues or problems with school work, please discuss these with us as early as possible.

Your child's education is of paramount importance to us and we hope we have your continued support in this matter.