

Attendance at School

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Working together to improve school attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with families.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Raise the profile of attendance

School makes use of home-school agreements where needed, parents' evenings, school posts, attendance awards and attendance meetings with parents to ensure everyone is fully informed about the importance of good school attendance.

What should I do if my child is absent from school or I am worried about my child's attendance?

School emphasises parents' prime responsibility for ensuring attendance by asking parents to inform us as soon as possible if their child will not be attending school on a particular day. If a pupil is absent without explanation, school will make every effort to contact the parents that same day. By contacting the parent, the school also ensures that the parent is aware that their child is not in school enabling the parent to take steps, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe.

Involving Parents

Evidence shows that early identification, conversations and relationships are key in tackling poor school attendance. Conversations with pupil and parents should take place to discuss attendance concerns, identify areas of support that are needed and put in place an effective written and reviewed plan.

Regular communication with parents is crucial in raising the profile of school attendance and punctuality. Some examples of engaging; notice posts, letters home, texts, emails, school website information, phone calls home and face to face discussions and meetings.

How do we support attendance. e.g. Attendance Plan and/or offer of Early Help Assessment

We know that barriers to attendance can be wide and varied for many children. Taking time to understand the child's point of view and work together with both parents, child and the school is essential to agreeing an effective written and reviewed plan of support.

A personal attendance plan or early help assessment can be used to support in identifying barriers to attendance and agreeing a plan of support with both the child and family

School are partners should work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Example graduated response to attendance

The guidance below sets out the expectations of actions that you should consider taking at each stage of a child's absence.

Excellent attendance	96-100
Rewards and positive messages home	
Initial discussions with child – identify barriers	
Consider Personal Attendance Plan	
Refer to school attendance policy and local authority guidance	91-96
Attendance letters or messages to be sent to parents	
Parents made aware of legal process if improvements are not made	
Child is now persistently absent from school	
Meeting to be held with child and parents	
Barriers to attendance should be identified and appropriate pathways implemented e.g. health	
Consider any medical conditions and ensure reasonable adjustments implemented and health service involved if necessary	
Attendance support plan and/or Early Help assessment to be considered	
Targeted support and adaptations to be made within the school environment	86-90
Formal action to be considered, unless evidence shows this is inappropriate	

Persistent absent reviews will be conducted every half term for schools to review and ensure decisions are taken

Multi-agency plan must be in place and include attendance as part of the plan or have a Personal Attendance Plan alongside.

Implement safeguarding and escalation measures to ensure child has been seen, this would include home and community visits

Relevant adaptations must be in place

51-85

Formal action should be considered (unless evidence demonstrates inappropriate)

Where complex barriers are identified, a school attendance panel should be formally

Child is now severely absent from school

Child will be added to vulnerable tracking list for conversation with Senior Leadership

Child will be discussed at the termly severely absent meetings

A multi-agency assessment and family plan will be in place which includes attendance

0-50

Attendance plan to be reviewed at least fortnightly and amended with relevant actions

Consider safeguarding risks and refer to thresholds document

Formal action should be considered.

Legal process and information for parents:

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental co-operation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem. They are never used as a punishment, only as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice can be issued to parents or carers who don't ensure that their child goes to school on a regular basis. The penalty notice is £160 per parent per child. If paid within 21 days this is reduced to £80 per parent per child for a first offence.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is appropriate in the following circumstances:

- following 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a term
- parentally condoned absences
- unauthorised leave of absence in term- time
- late arrival at school after the register has closed

Escalation to enforcement via the attendance pathway

In some cases, school can request a case is escalated to the attendance enforcement team where school support has been offered but attendance has failed to improve. School will evidence the support offered and the Local Authority will make the decision if the criteria is met for enforcement action.

If you are prosecuted and found guilty of not securing your child's attendance at school, the court can impose penalties, including a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.