

Attendance Matters!



TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE

Facts about irregular / poor school attendance

Regular absences from school can affect:

- attainment levels - the quality of school work, qualifications gained
- school routine - disrupting your child's learning and that of the other pupils
- the chances of children and young people being involved in anti-social behaviour a child or young person's general well-being and long term life opportunities
- improving regular attendance at school is therefore a key priority, both locally and nationally

What does the law say about non-attendance?

- Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents or carers may be taken to court and prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and their absences are unauthorised (or in other words, the school cannot or has not given permission for them to be off school)
- In 2003, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act provided an alternative means of tackling non-attendance in schools. Under Section 23 of the Act, Local Education Authorities and other designated bodies were given the powers to issue Penalty Notices to parents or carers who are considered capable of, but unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance.

Before Penalty Notes are issued: the work of the Education Welfare Service and issuing of warnings

- Parents and pupils are expected to work with school staff to improve and maintain regular school attendance; the school will offer advice and support. The school will help you and your child to improve their attendance prior to taking any formal action. If there is continued unauthorised absence, the school can request a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice from the local authority.
- Before Penalty Notices are issued for poor attendance, you will receive a written warning which will explain the extent of your child's non-attendance and the possibility of you receiving a Penalty Notice if their attendance does not

improve in 15 days. During this period, your child must not have any further unauthorised absences from school.

- There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning of a possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

How many absences will result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice?

If a pupil has an unauthorised absent for 10 sessions within a 12-week period, they will be issued with a fine. Each day is 2 sessions; therefore if a pupil is away from Monday - Friday, inclusive, they will be issued with a fine.

Can you appeal against a Penalty Notice?

There isn't a legal right of appeal after a Penalty Notice has been issued. You can, however contact the Local Authority if you have an issue if, for example, you believe the Penalty Notice has been issued to the wrong person.

Taking your children out of school may affect their education, for example:

- They may find it difficult to catch up on work they've missed - for example, if they need to complete any project work or if they're due to take tests / SATs etc
- Sometimes, if children already struggle with subjects such as Maths or English, they may find it even more difficult after they come back from holiday
- Pupils may find it difficult to get back into their friendships groups after a break
- Missing time during the first year at a new school or the beginning of a term can lead to problems, for example, knowing what to bring to lessons, making new friends etc
- Nobody likes to feel like they don't understand what is going on - pupils who return from holiday are often anxious as they have to 'catch up' and work harder.

Did you know?

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! Pupils will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year

Pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly.

90%: 19 days absence a year

Pupils are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year

Pupils are missing six weeks of school per year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to do their best.

80%: 38 days absence a year

The Government consider this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be impossible to make progress. Parents of pupils in this group could face legal action being taken by the Local Authority.