

Why is attendance so important?

A good education is essential if a child is to have a successful future and opportunities in adult life. Research shows that there is a direct link between attendance at school and academic achievement. Children and young people with good levels of attendance are more likely to gain higher qualifications. Having a lower level of attendance reduces a child's chances of achieving good results. It has been found that even short periods of absence can have a significant negative impact on a child's learning. Every lesson in school matters and encouraging good attendance from an early age will ensure that your child achieves their full potential throughout their school career.



The Law

By law all children of compulsory school age must get suitable full-time education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens. The local authority has the power to issue Penalty Notices or to prosecute in cases where parents do not take responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.

What can you do to ensure good attendance?

- **Make sure your child arrives at school on time.** Arriving late to school is disruptive for your child, the teacher and other children in the class.
- **Do not keep your child off school for minor ailments,** however, if your child is too ill to attend school contact the school on the first day of absence.
- **Avoid making routine medical or dental appointments during the school day** if possible make them after school hours or during school holidays.
- **Take an interest in your child's education** - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities.
- If you suspect your child is unhappy at school **inform the school at the earliest opportunity** so you can work with them to resolve any difficulties.
- If you need to take your child out of school **discuss the reasons with the school** as soon as possible.
- **Avoid taking holidays in term-time.** Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday, permission must be requested from the school and will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

If your child is absent the school will decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason given for the absence. Only absences considered to be valid will be authorised. If no reason is provided the school will class the absence as unauthorised

Examples of **authorised** absence

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstance e.g bereavement
- Approved sporting activity

Examples of **unauthorised** absence

- Frequent absence attributed to minor ailments
- Shopping during school hours
- Looking after siblings or sick parents or carers
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Holidays not agreed by school
- Arriving late for school after the official close of the register. For the purpose of the law an unauthorised late mark is equivalent to unauthorised absence.

Access Education Solutions has been appointed by your child's school and many other schools in the area to support the management of pupils' attendance. This service was previously provided by the local authority but recent changes in policy and the reduction in central services means that schools are now responsible for much of the work relating to attendance matters that would have formerly been undertaken by the local authority's Attendance Improvement Service.

All schools strive to raise standards and improve the achievements of their pupils and good attendance is a key factor. If a pupil's level of absence becomes a cause for concern the school will always try to address the matter with parents. However if the issue remains and there is no improvement the school may then make a referral to our service.

Our roll will be to investigate the reasons for absence on behalf of the school. We will support parents to identify and address any difficulties that may be preventing their child's regular attendance at school. On the rare occasions that this does not result in an improvement we will inform parents of their legal responsibility and prepare a case on behalf of the school that may be presented to the local authority to pursue legal action.

Useful Numbers

ACE - Advisory Centre for Education

Free independent advice and information for parents and carers in England and Wales on a range of state education and schooling issues.

Advice Line **0808 800 5793**

www.ace-ed.org.uk

Family lives

Free 24hr helpline for parents to discuss any problem in confidence, e-mail and web chat facilities.

Tel: 0800 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

Centre for Fun & Families

Support for parents who are experiencing difficulty with their child's behaviour.

Tel: 0116 2234254

www.funandfamilies.co.uk

Parent Partnership Service

A confidential and impartial service that supports families who have children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Tel: 0116 3055614

Email: parent-partnership-service@leics.gov.uk



Access Education Solutions



Information for Parents

ACTION ON ATTENDANCE