



Holidays in Term Time

- Schools will only grant permission under exceptional circumstances. All holidays planned for term time must be requested in advance for this to be considered.

Unauthorised Absences

Remember that your child must not be kept away from school for reasons such as:

- Looking after others at home
- Birthdays or visiting relatives
- Taking long weekends
- Shopping trips/trips to airports
- Interpreting or completing coursework/homework

Legal Penalties

- Prosecution which could lead to a fine or even imprisonment

The Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service works with schools, families and pupils to support and encourage regular school attendance.

The school Education Welfare Officer can:

- Offer advice to schools on systems to promote good school attendance
- Support and advise children, young people and families on improving attendance
- Work with other agencies to support the child/young person and family
- Take legal action to promote & enforce attendance

Please contact the school or the Education Welfare Officer who is based here for further information, guidance and advice on how you can support your child's attendance and learning.



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▶ Regular School Attendance

Advice and information for parents/guardians



Regular School Attendance means

- Attending school every day
- Arriving in school on time
- Attending every lesson

This leaflet is for you as a parent/guardian and explains your legal duty regarding your child's attendance at school. Regular attendance is crucial to ensure your child's success. Your child deserves the best education possible.



REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular School Attendance

- Every lesson really does count for your child. Children can quickly fall behind if even one day is missed.
- Catching up even a little lost time from school can be really difficult
- Good attendance is linked to achievement, better relationships with other children and better overall behaviour in school
- Good attendance is not just about what happens in school – absence when your child is young can limit their future opportunities, and set up bad habits for work and life
- Helps reduce the risk of your child becoming a victim of crime or abuse
- Helps reduce the risk of your child being drawn into anti-social behaviour
- Supports your child in maximising their achievements
- Whether your child is absent for a morning/afternoon or a whole day, or you have trouble getting him/her to school, first talk to your child's teacher – they'll try to help
- There is lots of support available in school and through your Education Welfare Officer – just ask

How Can You Help Your Child?

- Ensure your child is fully prepared for school each day – organise your child's school uniform, equipment, homework, kit, travel cards and dinner money the night before
- Ensure your child attends school every day and arrives on time, in order to keep up with school work
- Show your child that you think school is Very Important!
- Praise your child's achievements

- Get them into good habits early on
- Recognise that children can get into bad habits from an early age and that these are hard to break later
- Contact the school on the morning of any unplanned absence
- Let the school know of any pre-planned absences e.g. for religious observance
- Encourage your child with school work
- Attend any meetings in school to which you are invited
- Let the school know as soon as there are any problems or changes
- Do not keep your child at home if your child is worried or has a problem, e.g. bullying. The best way to support your child is to ask for a meeting in school to explain any difficulties and to address problems. The more time your child is absent from school, the harder it will be for them to return
- If you receive a letter from the Education Welfare Service, do not ignore it! Failure to engage and cooperate could have serious legal consequences.

Why Must Your Child Go To School Regularly?

- You have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance. This will help your child to have the best possible start in life.

What is Your Legal Duty As A Parent/Guardian?

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive full-time education. As a parent/guardian, you are responsible for ensuring this happens, either by registering your child at school or by making other arrangements which provide effective education.

S444 Education Act 1996 states:

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence”.

If your child persistently truants or fails to attend school regularly the Local Authority may decide on taking legal action to ensure their attendance.

There are various actions that the Local Authority may take which include an application to the Court for an Education Supervision Order, imposing a Fixed Penalty Fine or prosecution which could lead to a fine or even imprisonment unless you can prove that your child was:

1. Absent with leave agreed by the school
2. Sick, or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
3. Absent due to religious reasons

Absences may only be authorised by the school, not by parents.

What Can You Do To Avoid Legal Action Being Taken?

Work with the school and the Education Welfare Officer to ensure your child attends school regularly. The Education Welfare Officer will follow up incidents of poor attendance and will be willing to work closely with you to try to overcome the truancy and help you improve your child's attendance.