

Attendance - Guidance for Families

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this. Schools are expected to monitor all pupils' attendance records closely and to share these with the Local Authority and with the next school when pupils transfer.

Medical and Other Appointments

Parents / carers must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents / carers must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for his/her own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a parent or carer can attend an appointment for someone else.

Reporting Absence for Illness

Parents / carers should inform the school by telephone of the reasons for their child's absence by 8.55am on the first day of the child's absence and on each subsequent day of absence. If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason. Please make sure that we have up to date contact details and 2 emergency contacts.

Lateness

School starts at 8.45am and the register is taken at 8.55am. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day but within 30 minutes, they will be registered as 'late'; this is not an unauthorised absence and the child is counted as present for the morning session. Lateness beyond 30 minutes will be counted as an **absence**. This will be an unauthorised absence unless parents / carers provide the school with an acceptable reason.

What is authorised and unauthorised attendance?

We are able to authorise (at the Headteacher's discretion) absence due to:

- Illness or medical treatment
- Education in a setting other than school (this would be pre-arranged and agreed with the school)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances such as those given in the examples above

Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances (see below). It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis.

We will not authorise absence due to:

- Lateness of more than 30 minutes without an acceptable reason
- Holidays in term time

Any request for absence which might be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' should be put in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, and at least 2 weeks in advance including any relevant supporting documents. The decision whether to grant leave, and if so how much, remains with the Headteacher. Parents / carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity.

Penalty Notices When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school is expected to refer to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice. In considering whether to do so, the school will consult the latest advice given from the LA. If the absence meets the threshold in this document, the school will request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

Appendix A - Exceptional circumstances

The following situations might be considered examples of 'exceptional circumstances':

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);
- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Disability or respite leave;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence)

Appendix B - **NOT** Exceptional circumstances

The following (not exhaustive) are examples of situations which would not typically be considered as exceptional:

- Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates/rearranged holidays arranged by family members during school time
- Attendance at a wedding or christening abroad or in the UK
- A family member going for medical treatment abroad
- Educational visits
- Visiting relatives either
- Limitations on parents / carers leave' entitlement or dates; parents / carers' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays