

## How to contact us?

If you are experiencing a problem which could, or is having an effect on your child's regular attendance at school you should, in the first instance, speak to someone in school.

Alternatively you can speak to someone from the **Early Intervention Service** on **01204 338173**.

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The legal definitions of 'parent' are:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act (1989)
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

# Promoting good attendance



Information for parents and carers

Your child's education is really important. Regular attendance at school increases your child's chance of getting good qualifications and a good job.

**Any absence means that children miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on.**

## The Law

**You are responsible for:**

- ensuring your children receive full time education
- their regular attendance at school

As the parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a Penalty Notice or being taken to court.

The Local Authority may decide to prosecute parents in instances where absence is unauthorised by the school. If this happens:

- parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly
- magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class

- a Penalty Notice of £60 may be issued by the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution

## What can you do?

Ensure that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Lateness can be very disruptive for the class and your child. If your child is late after registration closes, this will be counted as an unauthorised absence.

**If your child is absent from school you must:**

As early as you can on the first day of absence

- phone the school, or
- send a note, or
- call at the school, to notify them about the absence, the reason and expected return date

**When your child returns to school always send a signed note which should:**

- be dated and
- give the reason for absence

**The reasons your child should not be kept away from school include:**

- to look after brothers or sisters
- to mind the house
- to visit relatives
- for long weekends
- for shopping trips
- for birthdays
- for holidays during term time

## Term time holidays

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time.

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

Recent amendments to school attendance regulations (which came into force from 1 September 2013), remove references to family holidays and extended leave and make it clear, that the Headteacher may not authorise any absence from school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply, in advance, by writing to the Headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted in the child's record.

## You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the period of absence.

Working together with your school makes a difference for your child.

**Help your child's school to ensure that:**

- rules are observed
- discipline is maintained
- other pupils and school staff are respected
- all tasks and homework are completed
- your schools buildings and facilities are cared for

**Your school will inform you of:**

- the daily starting and finishing time
- term and holiday dates
- other days when the school will be closed

**Your school will inform you if:**

- your child is not attending
- your child is frequently late
- homework is not being completed