



Attendance – a guide for parents September 2024

1. Why is attendance so important?

Quite simply, if your child is not at school we cannot teach them! Attendance at school is vital not only for a child's ability to learn and achieve, but also for the social skills they learn interacting with their peers and adults; for learning habits that will last into later life; and for equipping them to compete in the working world.

In Reception, Year 1 and 2, your child will learn to read and write, the two skills most fundamental to success, enjoyment and ease in later life. Children with poor attendance at this crucial stage struggle to keep up and catch up with their peers in these areas for the remainder of their school career.

As a school are passionate about education, literacy and lifelong learning –this is why we are obsessed with ensuring your child is in school for the maximum time possible.

2. How can you help then?

At the first sign of a problem contact your child's class teacher and openly discuss any worries you have about your child. It is important that we quickly identify and work together to solve any problems which could lead to poor attendance. Our doors are always open if you need support with matters that affect your child's attendance. Together we can always find a way forward.

3. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. Gates open at **8:30am** and all children should be in their classroom by **8:40am** at the latest. The morning register will close at **8.50 am**. After 8:50 your child will be deemed late.

4. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **8:50** in the morning and **1.10** in the afternoon.

If your child arrives between **8.50am** and **9am** he/she will be marked **late**

If your child arrives after **9am** he/she will be marked as **unauthorised absent**

If your child arrives after **1.10** he/she will be marked **late**

If your child arrives after **1.15** he/she will be marked **absent**

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office, and an adult should sign them in on our online system. If a pupil is consistently late a meeting will be arranged with a member of staff to discuss reasons/ difficulties for lateness.

5. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to **contact the school on each day that their child is absent**. If you do not phone us or send an in-app message via our Arbor system or Dojo, we will endeavour to contact you. This is because we share responsibility with you for ensuring your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we cannot make contact with you, then we will need a written explanation of the absence on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

6. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness (Cases of recurring absence through illness will need to produce a doctors note)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment

- Day of religious observance
- Close family bereavement

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school in advance, giving full details. Time off school for family holidays or celebrations **is not a right**.

7. What is unacceptable?

Requests for 'leave of absence will be deemed **UNAUTHORISED** for;

- A family holiday, regardless of a parent's employment restrictions
- Family celebrations (e.g. Birthdays), day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, parental illness, looking after siblings
- A regular GP, Optician or Dentist appointment

8. Is there any circumstance that may lead to my request for leave during term time being authorised?

Type	Able to authorise	Evidence required
1. Holiday in term time	No	N/A
2. Holiday in term time (services/military)	Yes	Yes
3. Wedding*	Yes	Yes (if possible)
4. Visiting terminally ill relative*	Yes	No
5. Funeral*	Yes	No
*Weddings, funerals and visiting terminally ill relative – time authorised		
	<i>Local – 1 day</i>	<i>Out of county –2 days</i>
		<i>International – up to 3 days</i>
6. Religious festivals (only actual festival day(s))	Yes	Yes (if possible)
7. Sporting events (county level and above)	Yes	Yes
8. Approved educational activities	Yes	Yes

Please do not lie about your child being ill when you are in fact taking them on holiday! It puts your child in a very difficult position as generally children do not enjoy lying to adults they trust. We always find out as most are simply unable to contain their excitement and want to tell us all about the fun they have had. In these circumstances the absence is always unauthorised and if the absence was for more than 10 sessions a penalty notice (fine) will be issued.

9. I have heard that the school issues fines -will I get a fine?

If your child has had 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence then the answer is 'yes'. Remember unauthorised absence is not just holiday. Lateness and absences where you have not let us know why your child is not in school are also unauthorised. You will also be issued with a fine if you and your child are stopped on a 'Truancy Sweep' (carried out by the Local authority) and you do not provide a suitable explanation as to why your child is not in school.

10. The High School have authorised my older child's absence – why won't you authorise my child's absence?

Whilst we work very closely with local schools regarding absence – we are two separate schools with separate policies and neither schools are obliged to do the same as each other. Assessment periods at the two schools are different as are the requirements of the curriculum and this may influence the different decisions.

11. My child is not yet 5, does the school's attendance policy apply to me?

We wish to work with parents to ensure good habits, a love of school and an understanding of the value of education are instilled right at the start of their child's educational journey. It is for this reason that all school based procedures mentioned in the attendance policy will apply to all children in the Reception classes regardless of age.

Although no legal procedures can be pursued if a child is not of mandatory school age, Reception children with attendance issues will be discussed with the EWO and support offered to the family via the schools own resources such as Pupil Premium funded projects or the Family Support Worker.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school should you require any further information or support regarding attendance.

Thank you for your continued support of your child(ren) and our school.