ATTENDANCE

A PARENT'S GUIDE

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Learning Trust
Every Child, Every Chance

Every Child. Every Chance

Miss School Miss Out!!

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn
- To have fun
- To make new friends
- To experience new things in life
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences
- To achieve
- To develop new skills
- To build confidence and self-esteem
- To have the best possible start in life

Key Point

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

Key Point

Do not be afraid to ask for help if a problem arises.

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness.
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work. (including homework and reading)
- Attend parent evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to support difficult or challenging behaviour.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.

WHAT WILTSHIRE COUNCIL SAYS

Why is attendance at school important?

- School attendance has a direct effect on a child's educational outcomes and is important for your child's future.
- School attendance enables children to access all available opportunities and reach their full potential.
- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less.

What can I do to help minimise my child 's time off school?

- One of the best ways to help your child is to make all doctors', dentists', opticians' and other appointments for after school hours.
- Make sure your child is never late for school.
- If this is difficult, you should contact your child's school to discuss this matter. Speak to the class teacher, School Attendance Officer or Headteacher.

How do schools work out my child's attendance?

- By Law, all children between the age of 5 and 16 must be in suitable full-time education.
- Schools count each day as two sessions - morning and afternoon. Your child has to attend 10 full sessions (five days morning and afternoon) each week to achieve 100 per cent attendance for that week.
- Schools then calculate your child's average percentage attendance over the whole term.

You do not have a legal right to take your children out of school. It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If you do not ask their permission in advance, or they do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Headteacher's may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays are not generally considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

You must make any requests for leave of absence in advance and you must be the parent that the child normally lives with. It is important to give the Headteacher as much information as possible when applying for a leave of absence.

Education is not an option- it is compulsary

WHAT THE SCHOOL NURSE SAYS

Should my child go to school today?

Headache, earache and stomach ace

- Children with a headache, earache or stomach ache can go to school.
- Just let staff know that they have felt unwell.
- Give paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink.
- If the headache, earache or stomach ache persists, seek medical advice.

High temperature

- Give paracetamol and plenty to drink.
- If you child feels better bring them in to school.
- If your child's high temperature continues for 3 days or more, seek medical advice.

Coughs and colds

- Children should be given paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink and can be sent to school.
- If you child is asthmatic, remember they may need their blue inhaler more often.

Flu and swine flu

- Children should go back to school when recovered- this is usually about 5 days.
- Sore throat, tonsillitis and glandular fever. Children should be given paracetamol, plenty of fluids to drink and can be sent to school.

Diarrhea and vomiting

- Children can return to school 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

Measles

- Children should return to school 4 days after the rash has STARTED.
- Chicken Pox- Children should return to school 5 days after the rash has STARTED.
- German Measles- Children should return to school 6 days after the rash has STARTED.

(Let school know as there may be a pregnant staff member)

Children don't always need to be kept at home; check the advice before making the decision to stay off school

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child or young person who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work.

In each academic year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.

Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised Absence and as such are subject to a Penalty Notice. Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Where a pupil's unauthorised absence amounts to 10 sessions or more within a 6 month period the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child.

The Penalty Notice is in the sum of £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the Local Authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the offence of unauthorised absence.

Key Point

Avoid taking family holidays during the school term.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week.

If your child has 90% attendance over 5 school years they will have missed half a year of school.

Key Point

Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.