

### **Education Welfare Officers**

If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory and not improving despite support from the school, the school will make a referral to their Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The EWO may write to you or ask to meet with you and your child at home or at school to discuss these difficulties. The Education Welfare Officer will then agree with you a plan of action to improve your child's attendance.

This may involve further support in school or from other agencies such as Health or Social Care.

### **The Law**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Most parents fulfill this obligation by registering their child in a school. Should the EWO consider that as a parent you are unwilling or unable to ensure your child attends school regularly without good reason you could be:

- subject to a Penalty Notice fine;
- prosecuted in a Magistrates Court and fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for up to 3 months;
- made the subject of a Parenting Order;

Your child may be made the subject of an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court.

## Is Your Child at School Today?

*School Attendance*

*Information for Parents/Carers*



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## Introduction

Receiving a good full-time education will give your child the best possible start in life.

Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Government research suggests that **17 missed school days a year = 1 GCSE grade DROP in achievement.**

### What you can do to help

- Make sure your child arrives at school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. If your child arrives after the register has closed without a good reason, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised' absence for that session.
- If your child has to miss school it is vital that you let the school know why, preferably on the first morning of the absence. (Your child's school will have an attendance policy explaining how this should be done).
- If you know or think that your child is having difficulties attending school you should contact the school. It is better to do this sooner rather than later, as most problems can be dealt with very quickly.

### Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

If your child is absent and school either does not receive an explanation from you, or considers the explanation unsatisfactory, it will record your child's absence as 'unauthorised', that is, as truancy.

Most absences for acceptable reasons will be authorised by your child's school:

- Sickness;
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments (if possible, arrange these for after school or during school holidays);
- Days of religious observance;
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement;
- An interview with a prospective employer or college.

Your child's school will not authorise absence for the following reasons:

- Shopping during school hours;
- Day trips;
- Holidays which have not been agreed;
- Birthdays;
- Looking after brothers or sisters who are ill.

### Leave of Absence

Recent Government Guidance has removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time holiday requests. Due to the disruptive effect on a child's education, you are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term-time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. Any unauthorised leave of absence could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Any leave of absence will be considered by school in exceptional circumstances and will look at each request individually.

It is extremely unlikely that leave will be authorised if:

- A child's attendance is already poor
- It is near or during exam or test times,
- It coincides with the start of the school year
- The school believes that it may have a harmful effect on the child's education: