

Attendance and Punctuality FAQs



What does Downsell mean by 'good attendance'?

96% and above is good attendance. This will give your child the best possible chance of success in school.

My child's attendance is below 96%. What happens now?

The approach below is what is generally followed at each stage, however we do appreciate that there may be exceptional circumstances and in those situations an individualised plan would be followed for you and your child.

91 – 95.9%: You may be invited in for a meeting in school, depending on the reasons for the absences. It is important that you attend this meeting so we can come up with strategies to support you and your child. It also demonstrates that you are engaging positively with school's attendance process. If you do not attend these meetings and your child's attendance percentage continues to fall, we may refer to the local authority for further support.

90% and below: Your child will be on persistent absentees list. You will need to attend a meeting with the school and the local authority attendance officer.

I called school and gave them a reason. Why is my child's attendance still low?

We record all reasons given on our electronic register - SIMS. Reasons do not mean that the absence is authorised. We would need to check the child's overall attendance. Please also remember that if a child is not in school, regardless of what reason is given, it is counted as an absence and the overall percentage is affected (it will be lower).

I have to take my child away during term time (holiday). What happens?

Term time holidays will rarely be approved. You need to complete a form and the Headteacher will respond with a decision. If it is not approved, your details will be given to the local authority's attendance officer. They may issue a fixed penalty notice for both parents (£160 each or £80 if paid within 21 days) or if you have no return date, they may advise us to take your child off our roll. You will be informed of their decision.

Why did school do a home visit to my home?

On the third day of absence, if we have not heard from parents / carers, then we will do a home visit as a welfare check to ensure that you are all safe. We may also carry out home visits earlier for those children who are absent and have attendance significantly below our school target. The local authority's attendance officer may also carry out home visits on our behalf.

What actions can be taken for my child's low attendance or poor punctuality?

Meetings to understand and support will be done in the first instance for pupils with low attendance / poor punctuality. If low attendance / poor punctuality continues then this will be escalated to the local authority (LA) attendance office. The LA's officer may issue a Notice to Improve, in which your child's attendance will be monitored closely. If issues persists then the parent / carer may receive a fine of £160 (£80 if paid within 21 days), which is paid directly to the local authority and cannot be cancelled by the school. If a second fine is issued for the same child within a three-year rolling period, then this is automatically charged at the higher rate of £160. This will apply even if your child moves school. Please be aware that the local authority can also take legal action, which could result in court proceedings. Referrals to social care may also be made for persistent low attendance.