

If pupils aren't at school, they can't learn.

Why your child should attend school regularly and punctually

Information for parents

Attendance at school and achievement

High rates of absence are associated with low academic achievement and increased chances of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour. A survey of 30,000 16 year olds showed that persistent truants are less likely to be successful in their GCSEs. Occasional truants were also less successful than pupils who did not truant.

	% of students achieved 5+ A* - C	% of students achieved no GCSEs
Persistent truants	13	25
Occasional truants	40	5
Non-truants	60	2

(Youth cohort study 2002 department for Education and skills)

School, parents and students working together

As with any aspect of your child's performance, much can be achieved by our working cooperatively together to ensure that your child attends regularly.

What the school is doing

1. We have appointed a non-teaching member of staff to monitor attendance. Her name is Mrs Julie Devereux and her title is Student Support Manager.
2. If your child is absent in the morning, and you have not contacted us to let us know, Julie will phone you to check that you are aware and to request a reason for absence. Your child's attendance record will be amended accordingly.
3. Where she is not able to contact you, the form tutor will request an absence note when your child returns to school.
4. If after two weeks, an absence note has not been provided, Julie will write to you to request a reason for the absence. Once the letter is received, your child's attendance record will be amended accordingly. (It is important to note that an explanation note is required if your child is late after registration closes. If not, that session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence).
5. If no explanation for the absence is provided, a further letter will be sent to you informing you of possible involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) Lisa Woodward and of the possibility of a Fixed Term Penalty (FTP - explained later in the leaflet).
6. The EWO works with parents when student attendance is causing concern. She can offer support where appropriate. However, parents are responsible, by law, for ensuring that their children attend school. Consequently, she also has the power, where parents do not respond to support from us, to invoke an FTP or pursue the matter through the courts. This is only ever done as a last resort. The FTP is a fine of £50 rising to £100 if it is not paid within 28 days. Lisa also analyses attendance data and works with Julie to target groups of students causing concern. This includes 'Absence Sweep' days, where she and other members of the Educational Welfare Service may talk to students with poor attendance either in school or at their home.
7. We reward good attendance. There is a weekly certificate for the form group in each year with the best attendance. The best attending form in the year will receive a reward at the end of the year. Students with 100% attendance are entered into a prize draw each term and their success celebrated at our annual awards evening. We also punish lateness with detentions.

What we need you to do

1. Encourage your child to attend punctually every day.
2. If your child seems unwilling to attend school, try to establish the reason why and then inform us. We can usually resolve most difficulties.
3. Inform us when your child is absent as soon as possible.
4. Avoid taking holidays during term time. The Headteacher can grant permission for up to 10 days, but will do so only under exceptional circumstances; this will be dependent on your child's current attendance level and what is happening in school at that time (e.g. exams).

Important information

A child's absence can be described as authorised or unauthorised:

Authorised absence

This includes medical appointments, illness, authorised holiday, exclusions, interviews, religious observance and study leave. Only the school can authorise an absence.

Unauthorised absence

Any other absence is unauthorised and will be recorded as such on your child's records. Significant levels of unauthorised absence may lead to the involvement of the EWO as described above. This includes:

- Lateness after registration closes
- Shopping for Christmas or birthday
- Tiredness after late return from holiday
- Attending events such as pop concerts
- Caring for family members except where this is agreed
- Missing the bus
- Birthday treats

What your child should do

- Attend regularly and punctually
- Talk to you or a teacher if they are finding it hard to attend
- Bring a note explaining any absence when they return.
- Sign in at the office if they are late to avoid an absence mark being recorded.

We hope you find this information useful. Please contact our Student Support Manager if you require any further information.