



Education Welfare Service

Bedfordshire Education Welfare service is committed to raising our children and young people's achievement by supporting their regular attendance at school. The service is able to offer you advice and assistance where your child is having difficulties attending school. Education Welfare Officers work in partnership with schools to monitor the punctuality and attendance of all pupils and their aim is to offer parents/carers a courteous and helpful service. Your Education Welfare Officer, Miss Gemma How, is based at Sandy Upper School and contactable on 01767 210000. She is here to help so please do not hesitate to contact her.

She can offer support by:

- Acting upon referrals from school where attendance is a concern
- Visiting your home and working with you in an open, honest and respectful way.
- Identifying reason why your child is not attending school.
- Setting targets for attendance and behaviour and developing actions plans for improvement including regularly checking school registers to monitor attendance.
- Making referrals to other professionals to support your needs and your child's needs for example working with the school nurse over frequent medical absences.
- Fostering good relationships, where they have broken down, between the school and parents/carers.
- Giving advice on welfare and child employment issues.

Holidays:

Please only take holidays during school holidays. Although holidays can be requested for up to 10 days and if authorised must be taken at one time even if this is for 1 day or 10 days - it is the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise or un-authorise the holiday depending on the reason for the request, a student's attendance level and academic development in school. Holidays during school time do affect a child's attendance and can mean they miss out on crucial tests and work. The Education Welfare Service is actively trying to discourage these holidays and ask that schools only give permission for holidays in term time for exceptional circumstances. If holidays are taken we ask that children's attendance is good throughout the rest of the year.

What you can do to help:

- Make sure your child attends school each and every day, arrives on time and keeps to school rules.
- If your child is telling you that they do not like school and doesn't want to go don't keep him/her away. Speak to the child, Headteacher or contact the Education Welfare Officer. We will work together and help your child feel happier in school and stop you from worrying.
- You must show your child that you believe school is very important.
- If your child complains about bullying or you think he/she is being bullied, speak to the Headteacher.
- If your child is off school, tell the school immediately. You can do this by phone or letter.

As a parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to make sure your child attends school regularly. If after support your child's poor attendance persists without reasonable explanation, the Education Welfare Service will need to consider legal action.