

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 fulfil 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 fixed penalty fine of £50/100;
- 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

Should you wish to talk directly to an Education Welfare Officer please contact your school/college or Locality Team.

Compulsory school age:

From: 1 September, 1 January, 1 April
following the child's fifth birthday
To: the last Friday in June in the school
year in which the child is sixteen
(1 September to 31 August)

If you would like a copy of this leaflet on audio cassette or in Braille or other languages please contact Communications Team on 01223 699220
Or E-mail:

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Is Your Child at School Today?



School Attendance

Information for Parents/Carers

February 2010

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 or ill relatives.

Holidays During Term-Time and Extended Visits Overseas

Because of 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.

Schools will only authorise leave for term-time holidays 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:

Very occasionally holidays of more than two weeks to visit family living overseas may be unavoidable. Parents should then discuss with school the most appropriate time of year and point in the child's education for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.