

# Attendance Matters

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows that missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At the Windmill Primary Federation our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

# The Law

The local authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have;

- 1) 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term time or
- 2) 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reason other than unauthorised term time holiday.

## Appointments

If your child needs to attend a medical/dental or other appointment we would be grateful if you could attempt to arrange this out of school hours.

We are aware that this is not always possible so if this is the case we ask that where possible you give us evidence of the appointment e.g. an appointment card or letter.

**Thank you for your support in this matter and we look forward to working with you throughout the school year.**

## What to do if your child can not come to school.

If your child is poorly and unable to come into school we ask that you:

- Phone before the start of the school day.
- When leaving a message or speaking to the school secretary please say who you are and EXACTLY what is wrong with your child. Just saying they won't be in is not enough detail. New rules state we need to record the specific reason for the absence.
- Please ensure it is a parent or guardian that is reporting the child absent and not another sibling in school.
- Please ensure you tell the school office rather than a teacher or TA as the office staff are the people who record the absences.
- If your child is not in school and we do not have an exact reason why, you will be telephoned on the same day by school staff to follow this up. If they are unable to reach you this will be forwarded onto the pastoral team who will decide what they need to do next. This may involve further phone calls and even home visits if we are concerned for the welfare of the child.

## What happens next?

### Term Time Holidays

We **strongly** request that your child is not taken out of school during term time for a holiday. If you do still choose to do this then you must inform the school of your intention to do so.

**NO** term time holidays will be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. All decisions will be made by Ms Bailey (Executive Headteacher) and you will be informed of her decision once she has received the official holiday request form.

If the holiday is unauthorised or no notice of intention to go on holiday has been received then you will be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) if the length of absence equals 10 or more consecutive sessions. (5 full days) This can include time taken either side of a weekend or school holiday.

**If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.**

# What happens next?

## Persistent absence

**Did you know your child is classed as persistently absent if their attendance falls to below 91%?**

We do not wish to enter into formal proceedings regarding attendance but we are duty bound by law to do so if all other attempts to improve attendance have failed.

**We would like to work with you at all times to ensure that this does not need to happen.**

**Communication is key**—we will communicate with you at all stages of the process and we hope that you will do the same.

Do not be afraid to let us know if you have any concerns - we want to work with you to solve them.

Our Pastoral Support Team are always on hand to discuss any worries and if they are unable to help they have a vast number of other services they can direct you to should they be necessary.

## Next Steps

If your child's attendance falls further and it drops below 91% you will be sent an Attendance Notification Letter.

If after 6 weeks their attendance hasn't improved and it is still below 91% you will be sent a 2nd Attendance Notification Letter with a leaflet explaining the legal Fast Track process that will be started if attendance falls further.

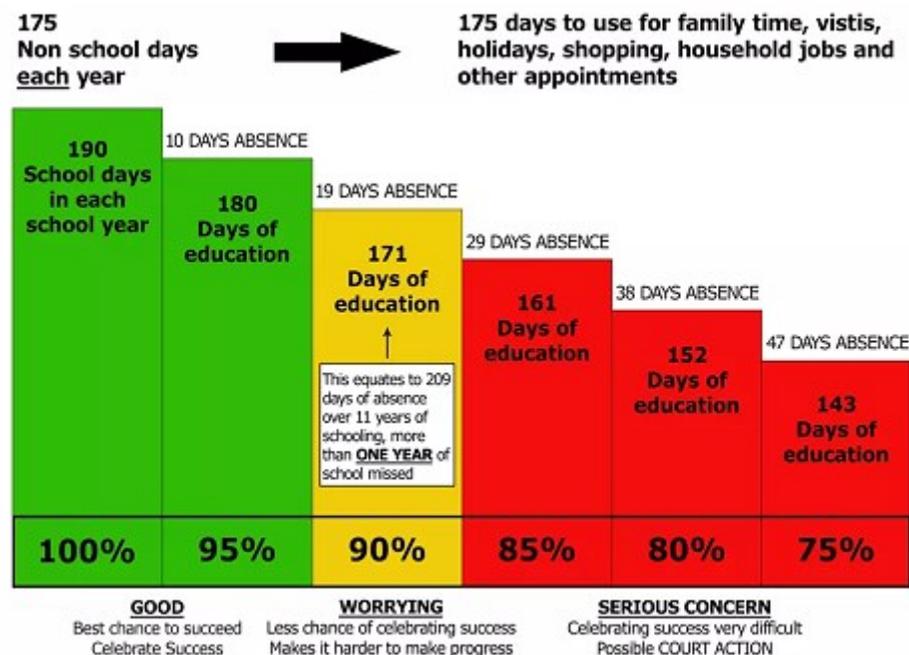
If your child's attendance then falls to below 85% in a six week period as per the second criteria for legal intervention the Fast Track process will begin.

If following the Fast Track Process your child's attendance hasn't improved we will apply to the Local Authority for an application to prosecute and you could be called to the magistrates court.

**If the case goes to court and is successful you could receive a fine or in some cases a custodial sentence.**

**School attendance offences are criminal offences and you could end up with a criminal record.**

Attendance during one school	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent lessons missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks	100 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks	150 Lessons
80%	38 Days	76 Sessions	8 Weeks	200 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks	250 Lessons
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks	340 Lessons



Here at the Windmill Primary Federation we want to work with you to ensure your child receives the best education possible.

As part of this we have decided to review our attendance procedures so that we can ensure we identify any particular challenges and support you in improving your child's attendance should you need it.

We are aware that children sometimes become poorly and are not well enough for school, or that they might have an urgent appointment that can not be made outside of school times. This is unavoidable and therefore we aim for children's attendance to be 96% or higher.

The pastoral support team will be monitoring the attendance figures every 2 weeks. If your child's attendance is below 96% they will be looking at ways to support you as parents to stop this from falling further.

# How this will work



## WORKING TOGETHER

**Our aim is to work together with teachers, parents and children to ensure every child feels safe, supported and happy to come to school.**

### First step—Early Support

If your child's attendance is noted as being below 96% and we are concerned that this is not due to a one off illness or appointment then you will be contacted by one of the Parent Support Advisors by telephone. This will be your opportunity to talk through any concerns or worries you might have.

It may be that you do not need any advice at this time and are confident that your child's attendance won't fall any further and that is not a problem. However, if you are concerned and need advice this is your opportunity to ask for it.