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# ***Your Child and School Attendance***

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***Did you know?  
Missing five days of every term  
every year is the same as  
missing a whole school year?***

## ◆ Why going to school is so important?

Lots of people think that missing the odd day at school can't do much harm. Even taking a short amount of time off can be a problem.

Your child may fall behind in their work and not be able to catch up. They will suffer when exams and tests come around.

There could be other problems. Children who miss school are missing the social side of things which means they find it hard to make and keep friends.

If they are not in school, where are they? Children can easily get involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.

## ◆ The Law

As a parent you are legally responsible for making sure that your child, from the age of 5 years, gets a full time education.

It's in your interest to make sure your child has a good attendance record. If they miss school regularly – even if you don't know about it- the local authority or the head teacher can take legal action against you.

Each parent could be fined £60 (if paid within 21days), rising to £120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days have elapsed). Failing to pay the fine will result in a magistrate's court prosecution.

If a child lives with a family friend or relative for a period of time who has day to day care of the child, each responsible adult is considered as 'Parent' under the Education Act and can equally be prosecuted.

## ◆ How can I help my child?

- ▶ Always talk to your child about school.
- ▶ Take a positive interest in your child's work including homework.
- ▶ Ensure your child gets to school on time. Arriving late can be disruptive and unsettling. It sets a bad example.
- ▶ Keep in touch with school staff via homework diaries or speaking with teachers.
- ▶ Always contact your child's school on the first day of absence.
- ▶ Attend parent's evening and other school events.

## ◆ When is it not OK for your child to stay away from school?

**Holidays-** During term time these are only authorised for *exceptional* leave. (Military reason or family crisis)

**Shopping-** or any other activity for which there is no serious reason

**Birthdays-** This is not a reason to be absent.

**Truancy-** is not acceptable and may well have serious consequences for both you and your child

**Informal exclusion-** your child must go to school unless you receive written information from the head teacher giving the length of the exclusion.

## ◆ **When is it ok for your child to stay away from school?**

**Illness-** Follow the schools attendance procedure.

**Medical appointments-** Try to arrange them during school holidays, weekends or after school.

**Bereavements-** Let your school know as soon as possible if someone in your family dies so they can treat your child sensitively.

**Religious festivals-** Ask well in advance for time off.

**Exclusion-** If your child has seriously misbehaved and the head teacher issues a letter, they must stay away from school for the number of days stated.

## ◆ **Where can I get help?**

Try to resolve any problems by speaking with the school staff or head teacher.

Contact the **School Education Support Adviser, Sandie Jackson, 01256 393140** for help or advice.

### **Useful Websites:**

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance)

