

Dear Families,

Important Update: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

I am writing to inform you of recent changes from the Department for Education (DfE) concerning school attendance, which we as a school are required to implement. These changes are part of the DfE's updated guidance, "Working Together to Improve School Attendance," aimed at ensuring every child receives the best possible education by attending school regularly.

Key Updates:

1. **Increased Penalties for Unauthorised Absences:**

The Local Authority (LA) is now leading a stricter approach to school attendance. As part of this, fines for unauthorised absences have been increased. It is important to note that these fines now accumulate over a period of three years rather than one. This means that repeated unauthorised absences within this timeframe could lead to higher penalties. Below are the new fines:

- School absence fines have increased from £60 to £80, which will now rise to £160 if unpaid within 21 days, rather than £120.
- If the same parent is fined again within a three-year period, the fine stands at £160 from the start.
- A third penalty notice cannot be given in this time - instead, "alternative action" should be considered, which would likely include prosecution.
- This basically states that if you went on 3 holidays in under three years, you could face potential prosecution.

2. **Monitoring Attendance Over 3 Years:**

Attendance monitoring will now cover a broader period. If your child has unauthorised absences, these will be tracked over three years, rather than just one, allowing for a more comprehensive view of attendance patterns.

3. **Attendance Reporting - Days Missed, Not Percentages:**

To ensure clarity, we will now report your child's attendance in terms of the number of days missed rather than percentage attendance. This change is designed to make it easier for families to understand the impact of absences on their child's education.

Understanding School Attendance and the Impact on Your Child's Success

A school year consists of 190 days when your child is expected to attend school. Regular attendance is crucial to your child's success, and every day counts. Here's what the numbers mean:

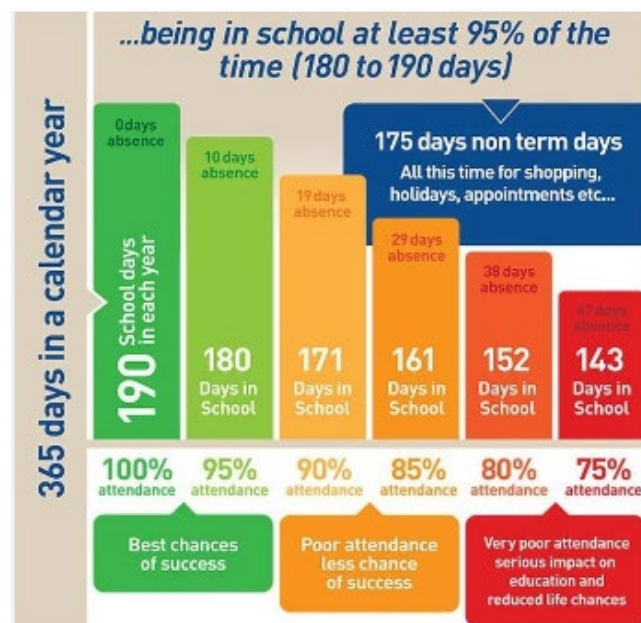
- **100% Attendance (190 Days in School):**
If your child attends all 190 school days, they have the best chances of success. No days are missed, ensuring they do not fall behind in their learning.
- **95% Attendance (180 Days in School):**
Missing 10 days of school in a year (around 2 weeks) results in 95% attendance. This is still good attendance, but it's important to minimize absences to ensure your child remains on track.

- **90% Attendance (171 Days in School):**
Missing 19 days in a year (almost 4 weeks) means your child has 90% attendance. At this level, attendance is considered poor, and it can start to affect your child's learning and progress.
- **85% Attendance (161 Days in School):**
Missing 29 days in a year (around 6 weeks) results in 85% attendance. This significantly impacts your child's ability to keep up with their studies, increasing the risk of underachievement.
- **80% Attendance (152 Days in School):**
Missing 38 days (around 7.5 weeks) results in only 80% attendance. This level of absence is very concerning as it severely disrupts your child's education.
- **75% Attendance (143 Days in School):**
Missing 47 days (nearly 10 weeks) means your child only attends 75% of the school year. At this level, your child's education is at serious risk, leading to potential long-term consequences.

Why Every Day Counts

There are 175 non-term days in a year, including weekends and holidays. This is ample time for shopping, appointments, and vacations. By ensuring your child attends school regularly, you are giving them the best opportunity to succeed academically and socially.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance, please reach out to us so we can work together to support your child's education.



Supporting Regular Attendance

We understand that sometimes absences are unavoidable due to illness or other exceptional circumstances. However, regular attendance is vital to your child's success in school, and we are committed to working with you to support this. If you have any concerns or face challenges regarding your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and can offer support through various avenues to ensure your child attends school as regularly as possible.

Next Steps

Our school will continue to work closely with the Local Authority to monitor and promote good attendance. We encourage all families to take note of these changes and to contact Mr Tankard, Mrs Middleton or Miss Wild if you need any further information or support.

All class teachers will be covering this topic of attendance when we have welcome meetings in September. Either Mr Tankard, Mrs Middleton or Miss Wild will be available to discuss further; however, we will have to implement the DfE directive and ensure we work with the Local Council to ensure all holidays or unauthorised absences are recorded.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "I. Tankard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'I'.

Ian Tankard