

# Attendance Matters



## Why attendance is important

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good routines for later life and the working world. It will also give your child the chance to:

- make lots of friends and feel included
- learn new things and develop many skills
- increase confidence and self esteem
- improve social skills
- achieve their potential and fulfil aspirations

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published a year in advance. Please be mindful that you're not entitled to a holiday during term time.

If leave during term time cannot be avoided, a leave request form should be completed. These can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise this absence.

Headteachers can only authorise leave during term time if "exceptional circumstances" exist, even if your child has an excellent attendance record or if you believe that the reason for the absence is justified.

## 90% attendance

- Stuart is a child who attends school for 90% of the time. His parents think this is quite good. Stuart is absent from school for the equivalent of one half day a week.
- Over a whole school year Stuart would miss four weeks of lessons. Stuart would also spend more time away from school over the year than in school.
- If Stuart's attendance for his whole time at school was 90% he would have missed 209 days of school. That's a whole school year!

## Arriving late

- When a child arrives late to school it can be very disruptive to your child, the teacher and other children in the class.
- If your child arrives late to school they will be marked as late on the register.
- If your child arrives very late, the child will be marked as an "Unauthorised Late" - this is the same as an Unauthorised Absence.

## What happens when your child is absent?

- By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given.
- Only the Headteacher can officially authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Parents should provide reasons for absences and the school must decide whether or not they justify authorisation according to Government guidelines.

### Authorised absences

These might include a:

- genuine illness of the pupil
- hospital or dental appointment for the pupil
- death of a near relative
- religious observance (faith of the parents or carers)

### Unauthorised absences

These might include:

- a shopping trip
- a birthday treat
- oversleeping due to a late night
- looking after other children
- letting the gas man or other service in
- the parent or carer being unwell

Whenever a child is absent from school the parent should:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- If no notification of absence is received, the school office will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Let the school know in advance of any planned absences, for example hospital appointments (where possible).
- Make medical or dental appointments out of school hours (where possible).

LOVE FOR GOD, LOVE FOR EACH OTHER,  
LOVE FOR LEARNING

Adapted from Dorset Council's [School Attendance](#) advice.

