



Every  
**minute**  
counts



Education Welfare Service

# School Attendance

Every day of school helps your child enjoy  
and achieve.

Good attendance provides better chances  
and more choices.

Children and Young People's Service

## The Law

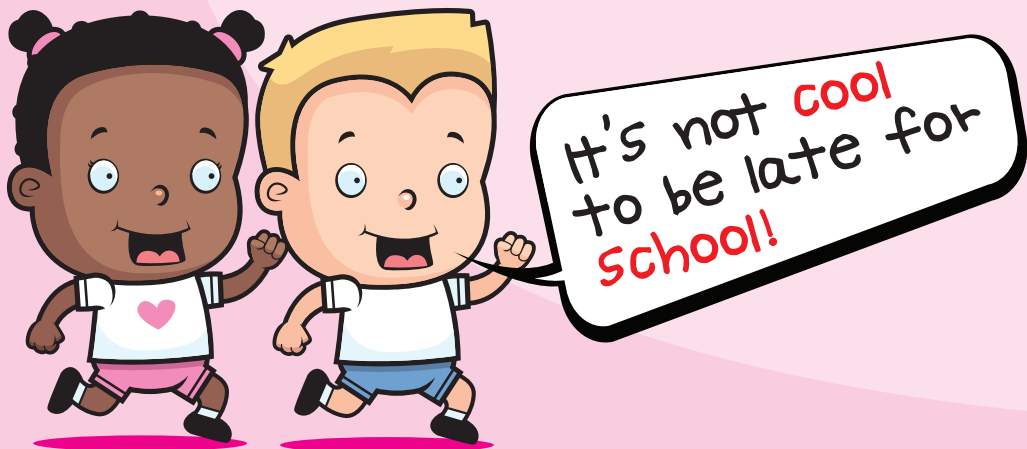
All children who are aged between 5 and 16 years are entitled to an appropriate, full time education.

- Children are compulsory school age until the last Friday in June of the year in which they are 16.
- Most parents want their children to be happy and achieve
- It is more important than ever for children to have a good education, to have choices and opportunities in adult life.
- Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected if they are not attending school regularly.
- Research shows that some young people who regularly miss school can be drawn in to anti-social behaviour or crime.

Parents/Carers are responsible for making sure that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. The Local Authority has to make sure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

- There may be times when your child has to miss school because they are ill, in which case you should contact the school on the first day of absence.
- Children may have to attend medical or dental appointments in school time, (always ask if appointments can be made after school) but routine appointments should always be made out of school hours. Most medical/dental appointments do not require a full day of absence from school.



- Some absences may not be authorised as a 'medical reason' or 'illness' without confirmation from a medical practitioner
- If you think you might need to take your child out of school for any reason, discuss this with the school as soon as possible, prior to the possible absence
- Holidays during term time are not an entitlement and must be authorised by the Head teacher and only if there are special/exceptional circumstances
- Unacceptable reasons for missing school include shopping, haircuts, birthdays and unauthorised holidays.

## What if my child doesn't attend school regularly?

- Your child's school is responsible for reporting irregular school attendance to the Local Authority
- Every school has a named Education Welfare Officer who is there to help with concerns about attendance or punctuality
- You will be given advice to address your child's school attendance issues and help you to meet your legal responsibilities as a parent
- Responsibility for ensuring the regular school attendance of a child remains with parents/ carers
- Where support has been provided to a family, and school attendance does not improve, legal proceedings may be instigated against the parents/carers

## Holidays in term time

- The head teacher at your child's school has a discretionary power to grant up to ten days authorised absence during term time in special/exceptional circumstances only – **this is not an entitlement**
- If there are special/exceptional circumstances for taking a holiday, you must state these on the holiday request form for the Head Teachers consideration, in advance of the proposed holiday. You and/or the Head Teacher may need to discuss your request before a final decision is made.
- Where there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions (half days) or 5 school days taken, a Penalty Notice will be issued. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
- As a parent/ carer, you are committing an offence if you fail to secure the regular attendance of your child at a school where they are registered.

## What is a penalty notice?

- The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced legislation that made provision for local authorities to issue penalty notices to address unauthorised absences and prevent a pattern of irregular school attendance from developing
- A penalty notice requires a fixed fine to be paid by parents/carers of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school.
- If a penalty notice is issued you have 28 days from the date of issue to pay £50. After 28 days it will increase to £100. Failure to pay within 42 days will result in prosecution in the North Lincolnshire Magistrates' Court under section 444 (1/1A) of Education Act 1996 for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school
- Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer individually, this includes partners and any person identified as having responsibility for ensuring the child attends regularly. In some cases it can include grandparents and older siblings if they have this responsibility. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

## What can I do to help?

- Take an interest in your child's education and encourage regular school attendance
- Contact your child's school on the first day of absence
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences
- Whenever possible make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours
- Avoid family holidays during term time

If you suspect your child may be unhappy or missing school, you should contact the school or local authority so that advice and guidance can be provided.

---

**Education Welfare Service**  
Church Square House  
High Street, Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire, DN15 6NL  
Tel: 01724 297502 | Fax:01724 296866