



## School Attendance

An information leaflet for parents and carers

Positive behaviours and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Our Attendance Policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers so that they are aware of their own child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

## Understanding different types of absence

As parents or carers, it is your legal responsibility to make sure that your child attends their registered school, aiming for at least 96% attendance.

### Authorised absences - examples:

- illness
- medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time
- emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

### Unauthorised absences – examples:

- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get registered
- shopping trips
- accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- day trips
- holidays in term time.

This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and/or prosecution.

### Holidays in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

## Requesting leave

The law specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that "the need or desire for a holiday" is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

At Matching Green C of E Primary 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:  
*... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time and cannot be taken outside of term time.*

It is important for parents/carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

### New rules from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

The Department for Education has introduced a new statutory national Framework, that all schools in England must follow.

- There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued for an offence of unauthorised absence, the first will attract a fine of up to £160 per pupil, per parent (£80 if paid within 21 days);
- A second offence in three years will attract a fine of £160 per pupil, per parent.
- Schools cannot issue a third penalty notice in 3 years, and must consider other sanctions, which may include prosecution.

**Please speak to the school if you need more information about the new rules.**

## What should I do if my child is absent?



- Contact the school office if your child is absent by **8:30am** on the morning of the absence.
- If your child is to be absent due to illness, you must let us know the nature of the illness.
- If the illness continues, please update the school daily.

If we have not heard from you by **9:30am** we will contact you or someone on your contacts list. If necessary, we will make a home visit.

The school office must be informed of absences known in advance such as medical appointments and you will be asked to provide proof of the appointment (e.g., an appointment card, letter or text)

## Is my child well enough to go to school?

Common sense is your best guide when deciding whether your child needs to stay at home. If they complain of a mild ailment (slight sore throat, slight cough or cold, minor aches and pains, slight headache) they should come to school. If their condition worsens during the day the school will contact you.

If your child has a slight ear or toothache they should come to school. If the pain persists, they should see a doctor or dentist. Your child should not come to school if they are experiencing vomiting or diarrhoea. Once they have been clear for **48 hours** they should return to school.

## Did you know?

Impact on Education		
190 days at school Full attendance	100%	Excellent Attendance
7 days Absent 183 days at school	96%	Expected Attendance
19 days Absent 171 days at school	90%	Persistently Absent Below Expected
29 days Absent 161 days at school	85%	Persistently Absent Less chance of success at school
38 days Absent 152 days at school	80%	Attendance Concerns Very serious impact on education
47 days Absent 143 days at school	75%	Attendance Concerns Extremely Poor attendance
95 days absent 95 days at school	50%	Severely Absent May include involvement with Essex County Council

## Late Arrivals

When your child arrives late at school, they will miss the most crucial part of the day and the start of their learning. Your child may feel embarrassed at having to go into their classroom or assembly late and they may find it harder to settle. This will also disrupt the other the children. Frequent lateness will have a negative impact on your child's achievement.

Minutes Late Per Day	Days lost learning
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

Classroom doors open at **8:40am**. Therefore, children should be on school site and ready to go in at this time. Any latecomers should be signed in at the school office by the parent or carer.

## What if the school has concerns about attendance?

You will be notified by letter if your child has missed more than 5 days of school or their attendance is less than 95%. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance.

If attendance becomes a concern, you will receive a letter and be invited to attend a meeting if necessary.

Should there be no improvement in attendance the school may require support from Essex County Council attendance team.

**Please note that if there are genuine reasons for poor attendance, the school will do its best to support you to find solutions. Please contact us if you are struggling and need help.**

## Remember:

- A**ttendance is compulsory.
- T**ogether we can achieve the best for each child.
- T**here is support to improve attendance.
- E**stablishing good habits from the start.
- N**ot being in school affects life opportunities.
- D**o not take holidays in term-time.
- A**rriving late is disruptive.
- N**otify the school when and why your child is absent.
- C**elebrate good attendance.
- E**very day counts!