

# Attendance Matters!

## Is your child missing out?

### Why is school attendance so important?

***Excellent attendance at school is important to allow your child to have the best possible start in life.***

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn
- To have fun and make new friends
- To understand responsibility
- To experience new things in life
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religions, and gender difference
- To achieve
- To gain qualifications
- To develop new skills
- To build confidence and self-esteem
- To grow as individuals

If your child has **90%** attendance they will have the equivalent of:

**½ a day off** per week,  
**19 days off** per year

**247 days off** over their school career of 13 academic years, equivalent to over **1 year of lost education.**

### Every school day counts

***Attendance percentages can be misleading. Consider the following:***

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Gives your child the best chance of success and gets them off to a flying start.
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress.
85% Attendance	27 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Almost half a term missed	Serious implications on learning and progress.
80% Attendance	36 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed Half a term missed	
75% Attendance	45 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed Almost 1 whole term missed	

## Is it ever alright for my child to be off school?

### *Your child can be off school if:*

- They are ill
- They are attending a doctor or hospital appointment
- They are going to a meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or if they are going to a Children's Hearing, case review or court
- If they are involved in an activity and the school agrees in advance
- Someone close to your child has died
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family
- They are going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them
- You are a Gypsy/Traveller family and while you go travelling you keep in touch with your child's teacher
- Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative.

As long as you have informed the school of the reason why your child is off, and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called authorised absences.

*Source: 'A guide for parents about school attendance' Smarter Scotland Scottish Government.*

Children and young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, under-achieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

## What can you do to help?

- Be aware of the impact of regular absences – missing school is missing out.
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Try to arrange non-urgent dental and medical appointments outside school hours.
- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead; build-up good habits of punctuality and attendance.
- Be involved with your child's education and school – ask questions.
- Inform the school if your child is absent due to illness or other reason.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school, staff are there to help and will be supportive.



Research show that children who regularly miss more than 2 weeks of school throughout their primary years tend to under-perform in their 4th year exams.

If attendance falls to 90%, a child is likely to be missing 1 out of every 10 words that are spoken by a teacher.

## What if my child is anxious or worried about going to school?

- Your child has a right to an education and to be safe and happy at school. But sometimes children and young people can be anxious or worried about going to school due to many possible reasons.
- You may feel letting your child stay off school is an effective option, but unfortunately, this will not help find a solution. It's important to talk to the school if this kind of problem arises.
- Your first point of contact should be the school. However there are also a number of agencies and services that can provide you with professional help and advice. (Contact details can be found below).

## What is an unauthorised absence from school?

*An unauthorised absence is when your child is absent from school and there has been no valid reason given as to why.*

For example:

- When a parent feels there is a satisfactory reason why their child should not attend school e.g. to take part in a family related activity
- Family holidays during term time
- Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse
- Absences related to issues in school e.g.
  - Struggling with learning or specific lessons
  - Conflict with, or fear of a teacher or peers
  - Bullying
  - Issues relating to social media
- Anxiety about school
- Anxiety/mental health issues
- Unhappy with course choices
- Unhappy with the school's attempts to provide support
- Insensitive sharing of personal details
- Challenging family circumstances
- Coping with adversity and trauma
- Experience of care
- Experience of abuse or neglect

## Support, information and advice

### ParentLine Scotland

ParentLine Scotland is the free, confidential, telephone helpline for anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call about any problem, however big or small. Phone: 0808 800 2222  
[www.children1st.org.uk/parentline-scotland](http://www.children1st.org.uk/parentline-scotland)

### Parentzone

Parentzone provides information for parents and carers about how you can support your child's education. On line at: [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone)

### Citizen Advice Bureau

Your local CAB can provide information and support about rights and responsibilities when it comes to schools and education. Information and advice on lots of areas at: [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) where you can also find your local CAB.

### Childline

Children and young people can get confidential help about any question, concern or worry. Phone: 08001111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Enquire

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning and operates a helpline for parents, carers and practitioners. An interpreter can be arranged upon request. Phone: 0845 123 2303  
E-mail: [info@enquire.org.uk](mailto:info@enquire.org.uk) [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

### National Parent Forum of Scotland

Provides parents with information and advice on understanding the new curriculum and supporting their child's education. [www.parentforumscotland.org](http://www.parentforumscotland.org)