

How can parents help ensure good attendance at school?

- Encourage good attendance by speaking to your child about the importance of school.
- Take an interest in your child's school work and find opportunities to give praise or reward attendance e.g. link attendance to the pupil's pocket money or allowance.
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of absence from school.
- Inform us on the first day of your child's absence before 8:30am and keep us updated on a daily basis throughout the absence period.
- Provide us with more than one emergency contact for your child, to ensure that if we receive no response from one number, we can try the others that you have provided.
- Cooperate with your school to make sure your child overcomes any barriers to attendance and always be honest about reasons for absence. Don't be tempted to 'cover up' for your child.
- Discuss planned absences with your child's head of year and apply for permission well in advance.
- Only take your child out of school during term time where the absence has been authorised.
- Make as many appointments as possible outside of school hours, for example, dental appointments. If an appointment is unavoidable, provide school with evidence and work around the appointment to maximise attendance. For example, if a pupil arrived at school as normal, left at 10am and returned at 12:30pm then the child would be present for both sessions.

Always try to get them to attend before, and after, an appointment if possible.



Find out more at our new website
www.northernleaderstrust.org

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REGISTERED OFFICE: KENTON SCHOOL, DRAYTON ROAD, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE3 3RU

Can pupils take a leave of absence during term time?

The school cannot be expected to authorise an absence for a holiday during term time.

Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important learning opportunities and other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school. Only in exceptional circumstances may a leave of absence be authorised during term time - this will be decided by the Principal. When requesting leave of absence in term time, this must be done as far in advance as possible. The minimum is 1 months' notice. Please ask for a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' available from the school office. If you think your child needs to be taken out of school, you should discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible. If the Principal is satisfied with the evidence and the notice period, they will authorise the absence, but it is important that you understand this would only happen in extreme cases. The request should be rare, significant, unavoidable and short. The school must balance the request against the impact on the child and exceptional circumstances do not involve cheaper costs, family holiday patterns, availability of accommodation or weather conditions. You will be fined by the Local Authority if you take your child on holiday during term time without permission from the Principal.

We understand how tempting it must be to book a holiday in term time. Cheaper holidays (even taking the penalty notice into consideration), quieter destinations and it being easier to book time off from work are just a few of the considerations. However, you must consider the hidden cost. One or two weeks away from school can be devastating in terms of undermining learning. Learning is like building a house - a firm foundation needs to be laid and then skills and knowledge are layered like bricks. Each layer is critical to understanding what comes next. Miss some layers and learning stops making sense.

GOOD ATTENDANCE MEANS...

Good attendance is when you are at school at least 97% of the time or 185 days.
Your education is important - don't miss out!

DID YOU KNOW?

A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can get is 95%

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

100%	0 Days	0 Lessons Missed
99%	1 Day	5 Lessons Missed
98%	3 Days	15 Lessons Missed
97%	1 Week	25 Lessons Missed
96%	1.5 Weeks	35 Lessons Missed
94%	2 Weeks	50 Lessons Missed
93%	2.5 Weeks	65 Lessons Missed
92%	3 Weeks	75 Lessons Missed
90%	3.5 Weeks	90 Lessons Missed

JUST 17 DAYS (90%) ABSENCE IN ANY ONE YEAR IS EQUIVALENT TO 1 GCSE GRADE DROP IN ACHIEVEMENT

BE SMART, BE AT SCHOOL

Remember a school year has 190 days, that leaves 175 non-school days for appointments, holidays and anything else.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know when you attend school you have a better chance of:

- Achieving full potential
- Having better career prospects
- Learning how to look after yourself and be healthy
- Growing in confidence
- Making progress in your learning
- Making new friends



Attendance at Northern Leaders Trust Academies

All parents should promote good attendance and work in partnership with school to ensure learning opportunities are maximised.

We all want the best for our children, to nurture and care for them. Having an excellent attendance record at school contributes greatly to this goal. Working together, we can give pupils every chance of reaching their academic and social potential. However, the more days a child is absent from school the greater the risk of underachievement and social isolation. Each pupil should aim to have 100% attendance and a minimum of 97%.

Where there are exceptional circumstances, for example, long term illness supported by medical evidence, school will set a bespoke target for your child and will work with the pupil and parents to maximise attendance whilst appreciating any unique challenges and rewarding success. In this brochure are some useful links to key information related to school attendance including how you can assist your child and what you should do if there are problems with attendance.



Why is good attendance important?

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and allow young people to feel part of a community
- Develop life skills and self-discipline
- Engage in learning and enjoy academic success
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour or feeling isolated.

We should not underestimate the importance of excellent attendance and being punctual. Even one day missed can have a negative effect on learning:

Attendance	Missed weeks
94%	2 weeks /50 lessons missed
90%	3.5 weeks /90 lessons missed

Look out for our good attendance poster

Getting 90% in a test or examination would normally be considered a good result. In attendance terms, however, having around 90% attendance can have consequences for a young person's future. The government call this group of pupils persistently absent. At Northern Leaders Trust academies, our goal is for all our pupils to have good attendance, even when they are experiencing challenging circumstances. Through effective support and working closely with families, we can ensure every child maximises their opportunities. The minimum target for pupils is 97%. Our experience is that this level of attendance is achievable for the vast majority of pupils. In fact, most will exceed it, and many will maintain a 100% record over the entire academic year showing tremendous commitment to their studies. Northern Leaders Trust academies have a vast range of support available to families who require additional support. We also have a network of support services to refer or signpost parents to so that they can receive the support they need.

Why is it important to be punctual?

As well as having good attendance, you also have a responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time and stays in school during the day.

All pupils are expected to be in their form room on time each day. Details of the start of the school day can be found in the Attendance and Punctuality Policy on the school's website. If pupils are not on time, they receive a late mark and you will be informed of this by text. If pupils are late regularly, they may be sanctioned in an attempt to modify this behaviour. If a pupil arrives to school more than 60 minutes late, without a good reason, the school register will have closed, and this will be marked as an unauthorised absence which can be used as evidence in legal procedures. An unauthorised late will also affect the pupil's percentage attendance and access to rewards and privileges.

Being on time helps everyone and shows respect. The pupils will not miss out on any important messages or learning opportunities. Teachers can concentrate on teaching and learning strategies without having to catch up late comers and the flow of lessons remains uninterrupted. When pupils are late it impacts not just on themselves but on other members of the school community. Being on time is a simple way in which pupils can help to serve their school community. Punctuality may seem like a small thing, for example, 'they were just a few minutes late', but it actually matters a great deal.

If a pupil is five minutes late to school each day they have missed three school days each year. Pupils often miss important messages and have an unsettled start to the day. It can lead to their confidence being undermined and in some circumstances to unacceptable behaviour because the pupil is struggling with the set work. This should help explain why being on time is so important.

What does the law say?

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, all children of compulsory school age (between 5-16) must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making appropriate alternative arrangements. A parent who fails in this duty is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of this act.

Once you have registered your child at a school, you are also legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child truants without your knowledge – legal action can be taken against you by the Local Authority.

Legal action can involve a penalty notice (£120 fine per pupil per parent reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days) or in more serious cases parents being prosecuted with a maximum fine of £2500. Parenting orders may also be issued requiring parents to attend counselling and guidance programmes, usually a parenting class. Where parents fail to pay fines, or the law around regular attendance is repeatedly broken and previous legal interventions have been ineffective, parents can face a period of imprisonment. Ensuring regular attendance at school is important and the consequences of breaking the law are serious.



How can school help?

Although school has a responsibility to liaise closely with the Local Authority (LA) and provide information which may be required to support legal action, our aim is to prevent this from being necessary. At Northern Leaders Trust academies we pride ourselves on our ability to support families and help young people thrive. We have the will and expertise to help and even in specialist circumstances where we are unable to help, we can signpost you to the right services and support you in this process. If you are experiencing difficulties with your child, and you haven't kept school informed, please pick up the phone today and ask to speak with your child's Year Leader. We are here to help!

Can a student ever be absent?

When a pupil is absent from school, this will be classified as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

The Principal will decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons such as:

- Illness which is severe enough to warrant time off school.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be made outside of school hours.
- Religious observance.
- Family bereavement for a close relative.
- Self-isolation due to a transmissible disease that poses a risk to others.
- If the school agrees to authorise absence this will not lead to legal action.

What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable.

Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates.
- Oversleeping.
- Arriving at school after the register has closed.
- Leaving without good reason during the school day.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation.
- Day trips or family outings.
- Problems with uniform/clothing¹
- Birthdays and holidays.

¹school will be able to help.

Should I allow my child to miss school if they say they are ill?

Many pupils have time off school for illnesses that are manageable on the school site with the help of over the counter medication e.g. headaches, colds, muscle pain etc. If your child presents as ill at home, you should go to the local pharmacy and ask for the appropriate medication. If you then contact school with the required information, we can monitor your child and issue any medication in line with your instructions. It is rare for pupils who take the positive decision to try to manage their illness through the school day have to be sent home, but of course if this is necessary school will contact you to make the necessary arrangements. Often school can be a helpful distraction and although pupils may not always complete work to their usual standard, not missing out on the ideas they are exposed to in lessons is a great help when they are fully fit and well again. Many pupils feel a huge sense of pride when they get to the end of the school day having successfully managed an illness and at Northern Leaders Trust academies, we would commend them on their resilience.

There will be times when it is not appropriate to send your child into school. Serious illness is managed best at home. We would, however, expect that if your child is too ill to attend school that there would be a parent at home to take care of them. Also, if there is a pattern of previous absence school may well ask for medical evidence. This could be a doctor's appointment, prescription or medication etc. If it is not possible to supply medical evidence school may send a member of staff around to your home to verify that the child is ill. We know from experience that some pupils will feign illness when they have another reason for not wanting to go to school which they are not comfortable talking about. This may be that they have fallen out with a friend or have not completed homework. Always take the time to talk to your child to try to establish whether the illness is genuine. If there are no obvious signs or symptoms of illness send them in to school and let school know that your child is potentially feeling ill or has been reluctant to attend school so that a member of staff can speak with them and monitor them throughout the day.

Self-Isolate

The government may advise your child to self-isolate at home because they have a disease that is easily transmissible and is a risk to others e.g. chicken pox. In this case you should follow government guidance or seek advice from school.

