

## Role of parents

- Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance. We ask parents to:
- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone or email as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

## Penalty Notice

*Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement, and essential in order for students to maximise the opportunities available to them. The Somerset Education Welfare Service will continue to investigate cases of regular non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable. Penalty Notices offer a means for swift intervention which the County Council will use to combat truancy problems before they become entrenched. This code provides that the power to use Penalty Notices is applied consistently and fairly and that suitable administrative arrangements are in place. Following the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid, the matter is then referred to the Magistrates Court for a prosecution for non attendance.*

### Further Information:

**Somerset County Council's Education Attendance Officers offer support and advice about your child's school attendance.**

**To get in contact with your Education Attendance Officer please contact your child's school or contact Somerset Direct on:**

**0845 345 9122**



**WEST BUCKLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND NURSERY**

**Maximising  
Attendance**

**Information for  
parents/carers**

### Why is attendance 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, as well as giving your child the opportunity to:

- Make lots of friends and feel included.
- Learn new things and develop many skills.
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Improve social skills
- Achieve potential and fulfil aspirations.

### What does the law say?

As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. The details of Parents with children who have unauthorised absence (including those who have taken an unauthorised holiday) will be passed to the school's Education Attendance Officer, who could consider issuing a Penalty Notice or starting legal action.

### How do YOU measure up?

Attendance	Days Absent	Weeks Absent	Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	150 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	250 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	340 Lessons

### Authorised:

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent emails or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Authorised absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### Unauthorised:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Sometimes children can be reluctant to attend school. Talk to your child's school if this happens. They can offer practical ideas and will work with you and your child to improve attendance.

### Illness:

Tell the school when your child is too unwell to attend. You will also be required to provide a reason explaining the absence.

### Medical appointments:

Tell the school of any doctor's or dentist's appointments so they know what time to expect your child but try to avoid having these during school hours.

### Punctuality:

Your child should make sure they are at school on time, ready for the register to be called. If your child is late for no valid reason, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

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.

### Holidays:

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published a year in advance. Please be mindful that absence due to a holiday is not, and never has been a parent's entitlement. If a holiday in term time cannot be avoided, a holiday form should be completed. These can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise this absence. This will depend on many factors including the pupil's record of attendance, whether they will miss any examinations, whether the holiday exceeds ten school days.

## EVERY MINUTE COUNTS

MINUTES LATE PER DAY	EQUIVALENT OF MISSING	HOW MANY LESSONS THIS IS MISSED
5 MINUTES	3.4 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	17 LESSONS
10 MINUTES	6.9 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	35 LESSONS
15 MINUTES	10.3 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	51 LESSONS
20 MINUTES	13.8 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	69 LESSONS
30 MINUTES	20.7 SCHOOL DAYS A YEAR	104 LESSONS

