

Attendance and Absence Information for Parents and Carers

Absences

Unless a child is genuinely ill, there should never be any discussion about whether or not a child will be going to school on that day. Parents should give their children a positive attitude towards education and school from the earliest opportunity.

Unacceptable absences

- Birthdays
- family Visits
- Holidays during term time
- Shopping
- Non urgent dental or GP appointments
- Looking after other family members.
- Acting as a translator for Parents/carers
- Bullying/friendship issues

Only the school can authorise absences. If you know your child is going to be absent, you must notify the school in advance with full details.

Non-attendance

If Great Barr Academy identifies a child as having low attendance, letters expressing their concern will be sent by the school medical evidence will be requested for absences. If attendance fails to improve or is of a great concern an Attendance Panel letter invitation will go out to Parents/carers. The Attendance co-ordinator will try to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to improve school attendance. Within the school attendance panel, parents will be advised on their legal responsibilities and examine any issues that may be causing poor attendance and how we can try to improve attendance.

If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, then the attendance co-ordinator may place a child on to a 'Spotlight on Attendance Campaign'.

Spotlight on Attendance campaign

- This is an initiative designed to raise individual and whole school attendance by the use of legal action.
- Challenges the notion that un-authorised absence is not acceptable.
- Raises Parents/Carers, students and community awareness of the importance of school attendance, the negative impact of absence and demonstrates that the Local Authority uses statutory powers to bring about change.
- Utilises section 44 of the Education Act 1996 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007
- Aims to use legal action to ensure parents/carers fulfill their legal responsibilities.

Holidays in term time

Term time holidays continue to cause significant concern and debate. While there are many different views, the direct correlation between attendance and attainment is undeniable. Absence from school interrupts teaching and learning and compromises progress. Birmingham City Council therefore seeks to support Birmingham Schools and academies in reducing the amount of education lost to pupil leave of absence in term time.

Full school attendance is vital for your child's educational progress and we expect all parents and carers to ensure their children attend school whenever possible. **Holidays in term time will not be agreed.**

Request a leave of absence

If you want to take your child out of school, you must complete the school's leave of absence request form. The Headteacher will then consider the request and write back to the Parent/Carer with a decision.

Fixed penalty notices for holidays during term time

If you choose to take your child out of school for a holiday or any other leave of absence without permission from school, it will be recorded as a period of unauthorised absence.

This means that you may be issued a penalty notice (a fine) to pay.

- Penalty notices will be issued as soon as possible
- Penalty notices are issued to each parents for each child
- The current cost of a fixed penalty notice is £60 per Child per Parent/Carer.

Regular school attendance - why it's so important

Going to school regularly is important for your child's future. For example, children who miss school often can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who go to school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behavior or crime.

All schools are required to record details of students' attendance and absence at school. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is absent, it is required that you tell the school the reason for the absence.

The school will record the absence under a particular category preset by the Department of Education (DoE). This data is then available to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for each pupil. DoE also receives annually the overall data for each school.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally four to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school - though some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they go regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk getting a fine (each parent could be fined up to £2,500 for each child) or being prosecuted.

The EA has a duty to step in if they believe a child is not getting the education required by law, either at home or at school.

Preventing your child from missing school: what you can do

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- Avoid taking holidays in school time as your child will miss out on lessons
- Contact the school to address any problems they may have at school and let their teachers, Pastoral Manager or any member of staff they may feel comfortable to talk with.
- Not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work such as hay fever or a common cold.

Support on school attendance

There are many different issues which can affect school attendance and we would want to resolve any issues immediately.

Examples include problems with:

- Bullying/friendships between peers
- Housing or care arrangements
- Transport to and from school
- Work and money

If your child starts missing school, there may be a problem you are not aware of. Ask your child first and then contact the school.

If you have any attendance queries please contact Miss Martin our schools Attendance Co-ordinator