



Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

Academic year 2017 - 18

**Boughton Primary School Attendance
Team:**

**School Attendance Officer –
Mrs Natalie Cullum**

**Family Liaison Support Worker –
Mrs Jennifer Malcolm**

Head Teacher – Mrs Mary James

Paper copies of this guidance leaflet are available from the school office.

Government and County Council guidance

*Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at schools is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, **a legal requirement**, parents being responsible for ensuring that any child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.*

Compulsory school age is defined as: commencing at the start of term on or after a child's fifth birthday and concluding on the last Friday in June of the school year in which the pupil becomes 16.

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; put simply: **absence means missed learning.**

90% attendance is the equivalent of **half a day absence each week.**

If a child misses one day a week for their entire school life (ages 4-16), it is equivalent to missing 2 entire years of school.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Our threshold for attendance is 96%.

96% attendance equates to 182 (out of 190) school days attended.

Authorised Absences

The DFE has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- (i) When a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- (ii) Days of religious observance, notified in advance;
- (iii) Absence due to exceptional family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- the reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence.

The following are classified as unauthorised:

- family holiday
- minding the house;
- caring for relatives;
- awaiting repair people;
- shopping;
- a birthday

We ask parents to notify the school in advance of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. A request for absence form **must** be completed for any planned absence, including medical appointments.

A two-week holiday in term time (10 school days) would take a pupil below the 96% expected threshold for attendance.

Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time.

The Impact of Persistent Absence

There are **190 school** days each year where children are required to attend school, each with two sessions a day, which adds up to 380 registration sessions.

This means there are **175 days** (weekends and school holidays) for shopping, birthday treats, non-urgent medical and dental appointments and family holidays.

If a child misses 16 days of school in a year, then s/he spends more time out of school than in school (191 days out, 174 days in).

The table below illustrates how much school time is missed by persistent absence.

| % Attendance | School days a year attended | % Absence | School days a year missed | School weeks a year missed | Over 5 years, entire school years missed |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 100 | 190 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 90 | 171 | 10 | 19 | 4 | 0.5 (6 months) |
| 80 | 152 | 20 | 38 | 8 | 1 |
| 70 | 133 | 30 | 57 | 12 | 1.5 |
| 60 | 114 | 40 | 76 | 15 | 2 |
| 50 | 95 | 50 | 95 | 19 | 2.5 |
| 40 | 76 | 60 | 114 | 23 | 3 |
| 30 | 57 | 70 | 133 | 27 | 3.5 |
| 20 | 38 | 80 | 152 | 30 | 4 |
| 10 | 19 | 90 | 171 | 34 | 4.5 |

When Attendance Drops to 96% or Below

96% indicates more than 8 school days (16 sessions) missed in a full school year, including sessions marked U – late after registers closed (9.10 a.m.).

In order to rule out which absences are in need of further action, we look at each child with below 96% attendance and RAG rate these.

| Colour | Description - absences due to |
|----------------|--|
| Green absences | Long-term, identified medical needs Short-term issues that won't be repeated (e.g. chicken pox) Additional evidence provided, e.g. doctors' notes, appointment letters |
| Amber absences | More than 6 absences for illness, where we only have the parents' word, within a 6-week period |
| Red absences | Term-time holidays of any length (these can never be authorized) Absences where an adequate reason cannot be given More than 10 absences for illness where we only have the parents' word and no medical evidence, within a 6-week period, particularly if there seems to be a pattern or trend over time. |

Red absences and attendance of below 96% will trigger the following process:

Stage 1:

Phone call to parent to check if the school can help to support child's attendance in any way.

Should attendance not improve within the next 6 weeks, a process will begin whereby the Head Teacher will write to parents/carers, reminding them of their responsibility regarding attendance.

NB: If attendance has dropped rapidly we will go straight to Stage 2.

Stage 2:

The parent is invited in to school to attend a meeting with the Attendance Team.

A Parent Contract is set up and agreed at the meeting. The contract is an action plan so that all involved with the pupil can work together to maximise his/her attendance. This may include a need to involve other professionals, e.g. a referral to health services.

The contract runs for 6 weeks, during which time anything which contravenes the contract is monitored and discussed with the parent.

At the end of the 6-week period, the contract is reviewed with the parent. *If the agreed attendance level has been met, no further action will be needed at this stage.*

Stage 3:

If parents do not attend or attendance does not improve during the contract period, a letter will be sent to warn of referral to the EIPT and allow a final opportunity for the parent to work with school.

Once a referral is made to the Education Inclusion Partnership Team, the matter will be dealt with by the Local Authority.

You can find more information about attendance on the county council website:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/Attend/Pages/truancy.aspx>

and the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

The majority of children at Boughton have good attendance.

We no longer reward attendance with certificates, for various reasons:

- Attendance at school is expected, therefore not rewarded;
- Mixed messages have happened in the past, where pupils have had a term-time holiday but still achieved a reward if their attendance was within the acceptable threshold.

Attendance at Primary School is within parents' control rather than children's.