



Cambridgeshire
County Council

School Attendance Information for Parents/Carers



MISS SCHOOL – MISS OUT
Don't let your child be the one to miss out!



The Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 yrs.) must receive a suitable, full-time education suitable for the age and ability of the young person.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Most parents fulfill this obligation by registering their child in a school.

Compulsory school age:

From: 1 September, 1 January, 1 April following the child's fifth birthday
To: the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child is sixteen
(1 September to 31 August)

Receiving a good **full-time education** will give your child the best possible start in life and best possible outcomes.

Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Government research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = 1 GCSE grade DROP in achievement.

Attendance during one school year

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent number of missed:		
	Days	Weeks	Average lessons
95%	9	2	54
90%	19	4	114
85%	29	6	174
80%	38	8	228
75%	48	10	288
70%	57	11.5	342
65%	67	13.5	402

What can you do to help?

- Establish good bedtime and morning routines.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time. This encourages habits of punctuality and lessens any possible classroom disruption. If your child arrives after the attendance register has closed without a good reason, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised' absence for that session.
- All absences must be reported to the school office for each day of absence (your child's school will have an Attendance Policy explaining the school's expectations and procedures).
- If you know or think that your child is having difficulties attending school, you should contact the school. It is better to speak to them sooner rather than later, as most problems can be dealt with very quickly.
- *Always ask for help from the school to support you and your child's attendance.*

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Schools can only authorise absences for a limited range of exceptional circumstances. These are typically absences that are completely unavoidable. Absences that will not be agreed might include:

- Arrival after registers have closed.
- Absences that are not properly explained by parents or child.
- Day trips and Term Time Leave
- Leaving the school without school's authorisation.

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether to keep your child off school if when they are unwell.

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Term Time Leave

The Government has removed the discretion for head teachers to agree term time leave requests. Due to the disruptive effect on a child's education, you are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term-time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for term-time leave.

Exceptional circumstances have not been dictated by the Government. Individual head teachers will make the final decision to authorise the leave of absence based on information provided and the absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Unauthorised leave of absence could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued.

Local Authority Education Attendance Service

It is the responsibility of the school to have their own arrangements in place to manage poor attendance by offering appropriate support to parents and children.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure regular school attendance.

If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory and failing to improve despite support from the school, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Should it be considered that as a parent you are unwilling to ensure your child attends school regularly without good reason, you could be:

- parents may be subject to a Penalty fine of £120 (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days). Non-payment of this fine will result in case being listed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court, without further warning being issued.
- prosecuted in a Magistrates Court and fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for up to 3 months in accordance with the Education Act 1996 Section 444.
- made the subject of a Parenting Order.
- your child may be made the subject of an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court.

March 2024

For further information about school attendance, please see our website

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance

[Non-attendance at school and the law - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

[SEND Information Hub \(Local Offer\) \(cambridgeshire.gov.uk\)](#)

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support/accessing-support-for-your-family

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>