

Why regular attendance at school is so important:

It is essential that all children registered at a school attend school regularly and maintain a pattern of excellent attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow your child to fulfil their potential, and attending school every day will help give your child the best possible start in life. Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- so that all the foundations for learning are in place
- to ensure full coverage of the curriculum
- to make sustained progress
- to build confidence and self-esteem
- to build and sustain lasting friendships
- to feel like part of the school community

Research shows that attainment and progress is negatively impacted upon by missed time in school. Children who regularly miss school are more likely to underachieve. In primary school, we are developing the habits of life-long learning!

Research also shows that children who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

School absence

- There must be legitimate reasons for your child to be absent from school, such as being ill or having to attend medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside of the school day.
- All such situations must be fully explained to the school in order for your child's absence to be recorded as an '**authorised absence**'.
- If a parent or carer deliberately allows their child to be absent from school without good reason, then they are colluding with their child's absence from school. This is '**unauthorised absence**'.

How parents can help:

- Aim for 10 hours sleep a night for your child.
- Make sure your child eats breakfast- it helps them stay alert at school.
- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead. For example, get their book bag ready the night before; read before bedtime.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time by 8:55am and is not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours wherever possible. If this is not possible, your child should attend school before and/or after the appointment.
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homework).
- Attend parent evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school - Meridian staff are always here to help. If you want to make an appointment with your child's teacher or a senior member of staff please contact them in person or via the school office.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness.
- Do not keep your child away from school for unnecessary reasons such as birthdays, holidays, relatives' visits, shopping trips or your own ill health.

The legal implications of non-attendance at school - what the law says:

By law, children must be educated, and parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day. We are required by law to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority who can take legal action against you which could result in criminal proceedings. The Courts can impose fines of up to £2,500 for each child not going to school and/or impose a 3 month prison sentence. Penalty notices may be issued to all parents who have parental responsibility and who can be traced whose children take unauthorised absences from school. This means that both parents of a child will receive separate fines and that each parent will incur a fine for each child who is absent. Please be aware that the proceeds from penalty fines do not go to the school. **Education is not an option- it's compulsory!**

My child could be really ill- how do I know if I should send them in?

If your child is saying they do not feel well and you are unsure about whether it warrants a day off, please send them to school. If they are truly ill, we will ring you.

When deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does my child need medical attention or have a condition that could be passed on to other children?
- Has my child vomited or had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours?
- Would I take a day off work if I had this condition?

What if my child has an underlying medical condition?

If your child has an underlying medical condition, it is important that you make the school aware of this so that they can work with you to support your child in school. We will also require a letter or report from the hospital or GP to place on your child's record.

What if my child has nits (head lice)?

Nits are to be treated outside of school hours. If you would like advice about treating head lice, please talk to the school office.

What if my child cannot attend because we want to go on holiday in term time?

The current law does not give parents any entitlement to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time. Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an **unauthorised absence**. Any child who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning. In each academic year, there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days - this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time. There are 175 days (weekends & school holidays) available to use for holidays!



Attendance and Your Child A Guide for Parents/Carers

At Meridian Primary School, we know that excellent attendance is key to successful schooling, and we aspire for 100% attendance for every child.

2019/20

Did you know that if you take your child on a 2 week holiday in term time, attendance for the year immediately drops to 95%? This means your child has approximately 50 hours of missed work to catch up on!

90% attendance is equivalent to missing 100 hours of lessons. This is equivalent to half a day's absence each week which is equal to a full month off school in a year!