



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS!

September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

My name is Nigel Green, and I am an Education Welfare Officer for the City of Doncaster Council. I will be working with St. Peter's Catholic Primary School to look at ways of improving the outcomes for all the pupils. One of the most effective ways of doing this is by improving attendance and punctuality.

Attending school on time, every day provides all children with opportunities for academic attainment and personal growth. Days taken off school result in lost learning and widens the attainment gap with their peers. Having strong and effective partnerships with parents/carers is the best way to allow every child a chance to fulfil their potential, both academically and personally.

- All parents/carers play a vital role in promoting good attitudes towards attendance and attainment by ensuring that their children are present at every opportunity, arriving on time and ready to learn. **Missing school through minor illness, avoidable commitments or holidays has a negative effect on a child's attendance**, and consequently, their learning and ability to achieve.
- It is important to avoid allowing children to stay at home unnecessarily or taking them out of school without authorisation.
- Our attendance target of 97% is the minimum that we expect for all pupils.
- Every lesson counts! It is this commitment to learning that will have a positive effect on your child's future aspirations and potential.

To put the impact of school attendance into perspective, consider the following statistics:

Days Absent	Percentage	Lost Learning Reception to Y6
10	95%	3 months
19	90%	6 months
38	80%	1 year
47	75%	1.5 years

The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, just **40%** of Persistently Absent* (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards.
- This is compared with **84%** of pupils who regularly attended school.
- **36%** of Persistently Absent (PA) children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and Maths GCSEs.
- This is compared with **84%** of regular attenders.

****(Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absence).***

The attendance culture and habits that a child develops in Primary School will be the foundation on which their education will be built on.

- **54%** of pupils who were Persistently Absent in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs.
- This is compared to **36%** of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.
- Regular school attendance facilitates positive peer relationships, which can be a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.



PUNCTUALITY

The first lessons in school are usually dedicated to Maths or Literacy. These lessons provide some of the fundamental skills that will serve children well throughout their lives.

Arriving late disrupts the learning of your child, and impacts on the learning of other pupils in the class. Registration is taken at **08.45** and all pupils are expected to be settled in class, ready to learn by this time.

HOLIDAYS

In total there are around **175 non-school days** a year. This gives families the opportunity to:

- Spend time together.
- Visit family members.
- Take holidays.
- Have days out.
- Attend routine appointments.

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time and can only request leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances. If you take your child on holiday during term-time without a schools' authorisation, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may result in action being taken against parents or carers.

CHANGES TO THE RULES

On 19th August 2024, the new "Working together to improve school attendance" guidance from the Department for Education came into force. This has significantly changed the way unauthorised absence is counted. ***All unauthorised holiday absence that does not result in a fine (EPN) can be counted towards a general attendance Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority for further action. This is a significant change and something that parents should be aware of.***

Penalty notices will be considered when **any** 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have been accrued in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (a school day comprises of two sessions). The sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G Unauthorised Holiday, U Late to school after the registers have closed and O Unauthorised absence)

All the staff at St. Peter's want every child to have the opportunity to realise their full potential. Good attendance and punctuality are vital to allow this. Any parent who has a specific concern about their child's attendance and wishes to discuss this can speak to Mrs. Young and myself by appointment via the school office.

Kind regards,

Nigel Green - Education Welfare Officer
Attendance & Pupil Welfare Service
City of Doncaster Council



Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing!

The Department for Education (DFE) will introduce a new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force after 19th August 2024.

Penalty notices will be considered for 5 days of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or schools' years.

First Offence.

The amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Penalty notices will be issued for each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Second Offence (within three years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for.

the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent per child.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS Certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

Court prosecutions:

Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken or other legal interventions.