

What if my child doesn't attend school regularly?

- Your child's school is responsible for reporting irregular school attendance to the Local Authority
- Both the school and the Local Authority can give you advice to address your child's school attendance issues to help you meet your legal responsibilities as parent / carer.
- Responsibility for ensuring the regular school attendance of a child remains with the parents / carers.
- Where support and guidance has been offered to a family and the school attendance does not improve, legal proceedings may be initiated against parents / carers.
- The Local Authority will enforce regular school attendance if there is no improvement. Repeated failure to attend meetings will not prevent legal intervention. Fines can be imposed up to £2500, may include a Parenting Order with a compulsory Parenting course; other community order and / or imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Don't let this happen – we are here to help!

Avoid leave of absence in term time

Children are in school for 190 days per calendar year
Children have approximately 175 days where they are not required to attend school in a year

From Sept 2013 headteachers / Principal's can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

- Leave for the purpose of a family holiday is NOT considered exceptional
- Applications must be made in advance by a parent / carer with whom the child normally resides. Retrospective consent (after event) can not be granted
- A leave of absence application form can be obtained from the school. Evidence must be provided to school at the time of the application to support the request.

- Parents / carers will be issued with a penalty notice or other legal sanctions (prosecution) when a leave of absence remains unauthorised.
- The timescale for payment of a penalty notice is £60 per parent / carer per child, if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per parent / carer, per child if paid within 22-28 days. Failure to pay the correct amount within the 28 days, will result in legal proceedings for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the Ed Act 1996 section 444 (1/1A)

Contacts

Virtual School & Inclusion, Education Inclusion
Church Square House, Scunthorpe, DN15 6NL
Email: educationinclusioncandc@northlincs.gov.uk
Tel: **01724 297 502**

For further information and useful resources:
Visit our North Lincs Council SEND Local Offer website:
localoffer.northlincs.gov.uk

Or for more information on Early Help Assessment visit: northlincscmars.co.uk

If you are concerned that a child is being abused or they may be at risk of harm, or to request information you should contact North Lincolnshire's Children's Services Single Point of Contact on: **01724 296 500** (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 4.30pm Friday)

101 non emergency police
999 police emergency

**North
Lincolnshire
Council**

**EVERY MINUTE
COUNTS!**

**SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE**

and leave of absence

**Every day of school helps your
child enjoy and achieve.**

**Good attendance provides better
chances and more choices.**

Why is school attendance important for my child?

- Most parents want their child to be happy and achieve
- It is more important than ever for children to have a good education, to have choices and opportunities in adult life
- Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chance of a successful future may be affected if they are not attending school regularly
- Research shows that some young people who regularly miss school, can be drawn into anti-social behaviour, crime or exploitation

90% attendance means that your child is absent from school for the equivalent of half a day per week, missing up to 3 hours of lessons a week, which equates to approximately 100 hours of missed learning per year.

The Law

All children who are aged between 5 and 16 years are **compulsory school age** and entitled to an appropriate full time education. This is from the term after they turn 5 years until the last Friday in June that they are 16 years old.

Why is it my responsibility to ensure that my child attends school?

- As a parent / carer you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly. This is a prosecutable offence.
- Prosecution can be through the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1/1A) of the 1996 Education Act, or alternatively through the issuing of a penalty notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. **There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of penalty notice.** Penalty Notices are issued to each parent / carer of each child, and any other person identified as having responsibility for ensuring the child attends regularly.

Please note : If a penalty notice does not act as a deterrent, further occurrences may result in direct prosecution.

What are authorised and unauthorised absences?

- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter, email or telephone message from parent / carer does not, in itself, authorise an absence. **It is the Head / Principal's (and their representatives) decision to authorise any absence,** after carefully considering the evidence provided by the parent / carer as to whether this meets exceptional circumstances.
- Where a number of absences have developed into a pattern of concern, a parent / carer may be advised by school to provide evidence to support such absences (to the school).
- There may be times that your child has to miss school because they are too ill to attend. In which case, you should follow the school's absence process and contact the school on the first day and every day of absence, providing a reason for absence and expected return date. **Without any explanation, school will continue to unauthorise the absence.**
- Children may have to attend medical or dental appointments in school time (always ask if appointments can be made after school). Most medical or dental appointments do not require a whole day of absence from school.

Unacceptable reasons for missing school: e.g shopping; haircuts, birthdays; alarms to get up not working; overslept; uniform not ready; lost equipment such as school shoes; sibling being ill; parental illness. However if you contact school before the start of the school day, they may be able to provide advice, guidance and alternatives.

- **Any absence that the school has not given prior permission for remains unauthorised:** e.g truancy; parent failing to provide any reason for absence; absence school considers avoidable; being present in a public place during the first 5 days and every fixed period of suspension / exclusion.

What difference does it make if my child is late to school?

Lateness – lost learning – minutes amount to days!

It is a legal requirement that your child is registered at both registrations – both morning and afternoon.

If your child misses a registration, the absence remains unauthorised.

Taking your child into school and escorting them into school premises is the easiest way to guarantee your child is arriving on time.



If I send my child to school, isn't it the school's responsibility to make sure they stay in school?

Actually it is still your responsibility! Schools are a place of learning. Schools have a duty of care, but have no authority to restrain your child to prevent them from walking off school premises.

Who can I talk to for help in making changes and improving my child's school attendance?

- Contact the school and ask to speak to someone as soon as you suspect your child may be unhappy or missing school.
- You can ask your school to undertake an assessment to understand any needs you may have and can gain an understanding of what type of support you may require to assist in addressing your child's irregular school attendance. This may be called an Early Help Assessment.