



ATTENDANCE



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I hope you and your family had a wonderful summer break. All TEAM Education Trust schools are looking forward to welcoming pupils back for what we hope to be an amazing academic year.

I wanted to let you know that the Department for Education (DfE) has issued new statutory guidance for attendance called *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* which came into effect on the 19 August 2024. It details what schools, parents and Local Authorities should do to improve pupils' attendance at school.

Attendance is an important part of a child's school life, so it's important you understand what the changes are, including the legal implications.

TEAM Education Trust schools strive to ensure the promotion of great attendance by providing all pupils with the best possible experience on a day-to-day basis. We want them to be excited about attending school, to feel a sense of belonging, and to feel supported so that they experience success in their learning.

We understand some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. As a school, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face when working with their parents to improve attendance and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

ADDRESSING IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OVER TIME

Where attendance is a concern, schools will work with parents who are willing to engage and support their child with improving their attendance. This may include regular meetings, direct work with the child and/or family, outlined in an attendance contract. If a parent is not engaging with any offers of support from school, and attendance continues to decline, the school may use a different method of support, called a Notice to Improve. This is a last effort to engage parents before school have no other option to consider legal sanctions, in line with the guidance. A Notice to Improve will be a formal collaboration between the school, the Local Authority and parents.

If these attempts at support fail, and a pupil's attendance continues to be a concern, the school will have no alternative but to make a referral to the Local Authority for legal sanctions to be considered.

If a pupil has unauthorised absences for ten sessions or more in a 10-week period, the school may refer a parent for a penalty notice. This will be charged at £80 per parent, per child. This increases to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to three months per parent.

TERM TIME LEAVE

If a pupil takes unauthorised term time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a penalty notice. The fine for a penalty notice is **increasing** - to £80 per parent, per child. This **increases** to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised termtime leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child.

For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

These fines will apply to term time leave taken after 19th August 2024. Any penalty notice (PN) issued for any offence that begins prior to the 19th of August will be issued under the previous rules. The new rules only apply if children are absent from school from the new term starting in September.

The three-year rolling period begins from the date the first PN fine is issued to the parent after 19th of August 2024. Any PN fine issued to parents before this date does not count towards the 'three-year rolling period' rule.



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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY – LOST LEARNING HOURS AND THE IMPLICATIONS

Through research, it is proven that below expected attendance levels can have a detrimental impact on a child's learning, impacting their outcomes at the end of primary school and at their outcomes at the end of secondary school. These outcomes can then impact an individual's further learning and future career prospects. Research also shows how not attending school regularly impacts on relationships with peers, social interactions and contributes to poor mental health and wellbeing.

Attending school regularly, on time every day, is vitally important to a young person to enable them to achieve the very best they can be. I frequently read on social media platforms discussions about school attendance and how, for example, term time holidays provide life experiences that are also an important learning experience for children and young people and should be allowed during term time. Whilst I understand parents may have this viewpoint, evidence does show of the detrimental impact lost learning time has. We understand that holiday companies inflate their prices during school holidays, something school staff also experience when planning experiences with their own families. There's also common misconceptions, when there are INSET days, that these are also causing pupils to miss learning time. INSET days for teachers do not cause lost learning for pupils, they are planned to ensure training is up to date and to provide compulsory updates to staff on changes to current legislation and guidance so schools can provide pupils with the best education and best outcomes. Therefore, learning is not planned for pupils on these days and parents are informed of these days with as much notice as possible.

We understand you may not be in full support of the DfE changes to statutory guidance, but hope you will support your child in maintaining their best possible attendance and work with schools in accepting support should your child's attendance be identified as a barrier in their education.

Missed Days		
Attendance	Impact	Hours lost per year
100%	0 days lost	0 hours lost
95%	9 days lost	45 hours lost
90%	19 days lost	95 hours lost
85%	28 days lost	140 hours lost
80%	38 days lost	190 hours lost
70%	46 days lost	230 hours lost

Impact of Lateness	
Minutes Late Each Day	Impact Per Year
5 minutes	3.5 days lost
10 minutes	7 days lost
15 minutes	10.5 days lost
20 minutes	14 days lost
25 minutes	17.5 days lost
30 minutes	21 days lost

WORKING TOGETHER – HOW CAN WE HELP?

Parents will often ask school staff for advice regarding concerns they have and managing difficult situations at home. The NSPCC have put together a [Support for parents guide](#), with information across a range of topics, including [Leaving Your Child Home Alone](#) with useful tips and advice.

We always want to work with families and that's why at TEAM we have our own Early Help Team. Allyson and Jo have a wealth of experience and have undertaken a wide range of training to cover many aspects of what parents and families find challenging and how, with the right support, they can overcome these.

Early Help - what is it? It's about taking action to support a child and their family at the time that a problem first emerges. Our Early Help team focus on helping the young person and puts the family at the heart of everything we do.



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If you feel there is something you would like support with, email parent@teameducation.org email Early Help at earlyhelp@teameducation.org or speak with your child's school