



Attendance Matters!

February 2024



Attendance Certificates

At the end of the autumn term certificates were presented to children who had good attendance during the term. Thank you so much to those parents who let us know that we got it wrong! Due to an admin issue, we reported that no child achieved 100% attendance during the autumn term. In fact, I am delighted to tell you that 27 children achieved an attendance of 96% or above. 19 of those children were completely brilliant, coming to school everyday and so getting their 100% attendance certificates.

Our school attendance for the autumn term was 94.41%

Monkeys—93.0%

Lions—95.50%

Giraffes—94.68%

Well done to Lions for getting the best attendance last term!

Holidays during term time

As you already know we do now fine parents who take their children out of school during term time.

We can only authorise an absence over 5 days in exceptional circumstances. Be aware that you will be asked for proof of an exceptional circumstance. This might be a letter from a hospital, print outs of flight information etc.

Please tell us the truth— we do follow up on what you have told us and we don't want to have difficult conversations.

Government Attendance Guidance

You may have seen in the press, coverage on attendance in schools. On the 8th January the government launched a national campaign called, 'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'.



At Heelands, we are committed to improving and sustaining excellent attendance. Whilst some parents can feel targeted, we treat all families fairly and offer support where possible to ensure that any barriers to attendance are removed for the sake of the children. Our attendance policy is on our website and ensures that all stakeholders know the rewards and consequences that are in place to support excellent attendance. Every day of learning really does count.

On the reverse of this newsletter are some of the key messages from the government's campaign.

What if my child is too ill to go to school?

It's usually safe for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild illnesses, like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat.

However, children should stay at home if they have a high temperature of 38C or above.

The [NHS has published](#) guidance to help parents and carers decide whether their child is well enough to attend school, including information on a range of common childhood illnesses and conditions, such as coughs, colds, chickenpox and headlice.

What if my child is too anxious to go to school?

Children can sometimes feel a little bit worried about going to school. Mostly, this is a very normal emotion.

It's important to recognise that going into school can help children to feel less worried than letting them stay at home.

If your child is anxious over several weeks, talk to their school about how they can support you.

We have put together some useful links on the [Education Hub](#) of mental health support which you may find helpful.



When can my child be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such [absences](#).

What about children with SEND?

Of course, some children face greater barriers to attendance, such as pupils with long term medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools should have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place. This is explained in our '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

Support may include [reasonable adjustments](#) for pupils with disabilities or help for pupils for whom [mental health issues](#) are affecting their attendance.

Will my local council take legal action against me?

If your child is absent from school without permission or a valid reason, you are likely to be breaking the law. Where this happens, your child's school or your local council will speak to you to understand the reasons. If your child hasn't attended because they are struggling to, both your child's school and your local council are expected to put the right support in place to help you.

If you do not take part in that support, or it doesn't work because more structured formal support is needed, then your child's school or your local council may:

- Invite you to agree to a parenting contract. This is not a punishment or a criticism of your parenting. It is a more formal action plan that sets out what you will do to improve your child's attendance and what your child's school and/or your local council will do to support this.
- Apply to the family court for an education supervision order to ensure you and your child receive advice, assistance and direction to make sure they receive a suitable full-time education.

If you do not make any efforts to improve your child's attendance or it is clear you have knowingly allowed your child to be absent without good reason – for example, taking your child on holiday in school time without permission – your local council may prosecute you to protect your child's right to a full-time education. Even during this process, you have the opportunity to accept and engage in voluntary support (such as an early help assessment) or formal support (such as a parenting contract or education supervision order) to prevent the case from going to court. If found guilty you may be given a parenting order, community order, a fine of up to £2,500 or in very exceptional circumstances a sentence of up to 3 months in prison.

