



Singleton Church of England Primary School



Good School Attendance Guide

Helping your child to make the most out of school



DfE New regulations for schools – from August 19th 2024

From August 2024 new regulations were put in place by the Department for Education. Every state school in England now has to share their daily attendance registers across the education sector - including with the department for education, councils, and trusts in the next stage of the government's drive to reduce pupil absence in school. These reforms are the next phase in the government's plan to improve attendance following the pandemic which has seen a worldwide rise in absence and persistent absence driven by broken habits of attendance, and new and exacerbated barriers like mental ill health.

Parent fines for unauthorised absences will also be brought under a national framework to help tackle inconsistencies in their use. A fine to parents must be considered if a child misses 5 days of school for unauthorised absence. Alongside this, costs for fines will go up from £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days and from £120 to £160 if paid in 28 days which will ensure all parents are aware of when they might face a fine to ensure all councils are issuing fines appropriately.

Key guidance setting out how schools and local authorities must take a 'support-first' approach to help pupils and their families to tackle barriers to attendance will be made statutory from August 2024. The [working together to improve school attendance guidance](#) sets expectations including regular meetings between schools and local authorities to agree plans for the most at-risk absent children.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

1.0 Introduction

Good School attendance habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents set the standards and expectations for your child.

Showing your child, the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but also helps them to keep and sustain friendships and enjoy the school environment. We focus in our school on promoting a culture that is calm, orderly, safe and supportive where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

The staff at Singleton School are there to support you, they understand the difficulties some parents can face and will work with you. Trust the experience of the class teacher and other school staff and share with them any concerns you may have. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and

even what they had for lunch! Remember children can be tired when coming out of school, so a short chat over a snack may produce a better result than a long list of questions.

If your child raises anything that concerns you, it is much better to raise it with your child's class teacher, at the earliest opportunity. Allow the school the opportunity to address any concerns or difficulties. This often can help put your mind at rest, know that your child is ok and is doing well in school.

At Singleton School, we want all children to have a positive experience of school life and be able to reach their full potential. One way in which parents can help their child to do this is by ensuring they attend school **every day**. Parents can often feel that more time is spent at school than at home. By completing a quick and easy sum, we can see just how many days children attend school.

- There are 365 days in the year and 190 days in the school year.
- If we take, the days in school away from the days in the year we see that for 175 days children are at home with their parents.
- If a child takes leave of absence during term time, 10 school days, attendance starts to fall to only 180 days in school.
- If the child is then ill for five or more days in a year, they start to be at home more than they are in school.

2.0 Absence from school

As the parent you are responsible for ensuring that once your child is registered at a school that they attend regularly and punctually. Starting good habits earlier on is much easier than trying to change poor attendance habits, battling with your child to attend school and struggling to get out of the door on time. Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child.

School absence falls into one of two categories;

- **Authorised**, those which schools can give you permission for
- **Unauthorised**, those which they will not.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Examples of Authorised Absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital / emergency dental appointment for the pupil that cannot be taken outside of the school day
- Death of a near relative
- Religious observance (Faith of the parent / carer)

Examples of Unauthorised Absence:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily

- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the Headteacher
- Sickness of a parent, or other family member
- Inadequate clothing for school
- Child being used as a carer
- Problems with transport
- School refusal
- Non-urgent medical treatment – (e.g., dental check-up, doctors' appointments for minor ailments.) - these should be made for after 3pm when school finishes.

Whilst as a parent you may think you can give your child permission to be at home, **you cannot**. The only person who **can** give permission for a child to be absent from school is the school's **Headteacher**.

During school hours the school staff are legally in ***loco parentis*** and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the school day, the parent / carer must contact the school with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must sign out at the school office.

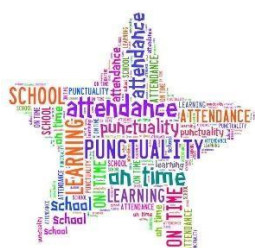
Parents should be aware that the decision whether to authorise an absence or not rests with the school. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Whenever a child is, absent from school, the parent / carer should:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, either by phone or you can call into school and report to reception by **9:10am**
- If no notification of absence is received, the school office / Attendance Officer will contact the parent / carer to ascertain the reason
- The school's Head teacher will decide whether to authorise the absence, depending upon the reason given.

Most childhood sickness that prevents school attendance will be classed as authorised absence. However, if your child is frequently absent from school due to sickness, we will ask that you provide medical evidence otherwise; we will stop authorising the absences and potentially seek advice from the Local authority or request that you come in for a meeting with the Head teacher and the Family Learning Mentor. This does not mean that as a school we do not believe you or your child, but that we want to do the best for you by ensuring your child can attend school as much as possible. We will do this by providing extra support such as accessing the school nursing team if needed or explore options such as attending school just in the mornings and resting in the afternoons.



3.0 The importance of good attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children that have high levels of absence struggle with friendships, confidence and self-esteem. They also often feel that they have been left behind in aspects of learning, which often results in them not wanting to come to school.

4.0 The importance of arriving on time

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.



School Times

- Whistle Blown and Doors open **8:40am**
- Registration closes at **8:50am**
- Lunch time registration closes at **1:05pm**
- End of school day **3:15pm**

The school day

- The school day starts at **8.40am** when **all** children come into school – we **expect all** children to be in school at this time.
- Parents should ensure that pupils are not left unattended on the playground **before 8:40am**; unless they are booked into Breakfast Club as staff are not on duty until **8.40am** when they open the doors.
- Registers are taken by **8:50 am** and your child will receive a **late mark 'L'** if they are not in by **8:50am**
- Children arriving after **8.40am** are required to come into school via the school office. Children should be accompanied by a parent/carer.
- Children arriving after **8:50 am** should be accompanied by a parent/carer who must provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded
- At **9.10am** (30 minutes after the start of the school day) the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – **'U'**, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence
- This is monitored by the Family Learning Mentor, she then reports directly to the Head and the Governing Body.

- If a pattern arises of children regularly arriving after **8:40am** then parents will be invited in to school to discuss this and the attendance team at LCC made may informed.

When a child arrives on time:

- Registration takes place quickly and smoothly
- An activity is put on the board or out around the classroom
- The day gets off to a good start for everyone
- Everyone hears the information given and is included in important explanations and discussions.
This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected of them

When a Child Arrives Late:

- It interrupts concentration
- It wastes valuable learning time
- The teacher repeats information / instructions whilst others have to wait
- The late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed important teaching points, missed discussions where ideas are shared and will be generally unsettled
- Children feel stressed and anxious about having to walk into their lessons late, some children find being late very distressing.

5.0 Collection

- Parents must pick up their children at **3.15pm** promptly or promptly at **4.15pm** if their child attends and extra-curricular activity. Our staff have a variety of commitments after school – running clubs, staff meetings and courses and it should not be assumed that they are available to supervise children after this time.
- If a child is not collected at **3.15pm** the Family Learning Mentor will be notified and parents will be contacted. The expectation is that parents collect at **3.15pm** unless there is an extenuating circumstance.
- If children do an extra-curricular activity – the expectation is that they are collected promptly at **4.15pm** unless there is an extenuating circumstance. If the child/ren is/are not collected promptly, the Learning Mentor will be informed and parents will be contacted.
- All late collections will be monitored and logged and where applicable the late drop off and collection protocols will be implemented.
- At **3:15pm**, the children become your responsibility and it is imperative that you collect on time.
- Being collected late causes unnecessary anxiety and upset for children.

Full details of the Drop off and Collection Policy are available on the school website

6.0 Holidays in term time

Requesting Holidays During Term Time

Important Changes to Attendance Policy (Effective from 19th August 2024)

We aim to ensure that all parents and guardians are fully aware of the new attendance framework and how it affects holiday requests during term time.

Key Points of the New Attendance Framework

1. **Penalty Notices:** Penalty notices will be issued if your child's absence meets the threshold. Each case will be reviewed individually to ensure fairness.
2. **Prosecution for Unauthorised Leave:** Unauthorised leave of 15 days or more is considered excessive and may lead to prosecution, emphasizing the importance of regular attendance.
3. **Compliance with New Framework:** Our school follows the new framework and the advice of Lancashire County Council to meet statutory requirements.

Understanding the New Guidance

With the support of our Lancashire County Council (LCC) Attendance Officer, we have diligently worked through the new documentation to understand its implications.

Summary of Changes in Legislation (From August 2024)

- **New Requirements:** The Department for Education (DfE) has implemented new statutory guidance to improve school attendance.
- **Key Changes:**
 - Schools must monitor attendance more closely and act promptly on unexplained absences.
 - Greater emphasis on working with parents to support regular attendance.
 - Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly, except in allowable circumstances such as illness or pre-approved absences.
 - Stricter enforcement of attendance policies, including fines for unauthorised term-time holidays and prosecutions for excessive unauthorised absence.
 - Fines for unauthorised absences will be standardised nationally. A fine will be considered if a child misses 5 days of school without authorisation. The cost of fines will increase from £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days, and from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days. Fines are issued to both parents for each of their children.

Legislative Compliance

Our school is required to comply with the new DfE guidance, which includes the use of fines for unauthorised absences. The governing body will consider each case individually, applying fines where appropriate.

Holiday Requests in Term Time

Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are “exceptional” circumstances to warrant the granting of leave. In our school, the S.H.E. Committee supports the monitoring of absences and will consider applications for holidays in term time.

Lancashire County Council attendance department has explained that the following examples are classed as exceptional circumstances:

- **Parents in the armed forces** who miss school holidays.
- **Police** whose annual leave is dictated by circumstances such as riots, critical incidents, or special events like the Olympics.
- **Parents whose holidays are inflexible.** In this circumstance, parents would need to provide the contact names of their employers to clarify this (e.g., where a factory closes down for a set date each year and holidays cannot be taken outside this time).

As a result, the Governing Body had no choice but to enforce both national and county requirements as laid out in the school’s attendance policy:

- Holidays will not be authorised in term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
- The County recommended “request for leave” forms will be used and can be obtained online from the school’s website.
- All applications for “exceptional circumstance” leave must be made allowing 6 weeks for a decision to be made.
- Parents applying for an exceptional circumstance will be expected to provide evidence to support the application.
- The decision will be made by a governor representative of the S.H.E. committee in consultation with the headteacher.
- Parents may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the application for exceptional leave.
- Parents will be informed by letter as to the outcome.

Support from Lancashire Attendance Officer

Our LCC Attendance Officer visits each term to review our attendance data, discuss concerns, and advise on steps to improve attendance.

Impact on Learning

Regular attendance is crucial for your child’s learning and development. Extended absences can significantly impact their academic progress and social integration, as well as the progress of other pupils within the class. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring your child attends school regularly.

Respect for Staff

Please remember that our staff members who contact you or send out letters regarding penalty notices are following protocol. They are not responsible for making the rules. We kindly ask that you treat them with respect and understanding.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we implement these changes. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.



7.0 Attendance information for parents

Significantly above expectations	Above 99%
Above average expectations	97%-99%
Average	95% –97%
Below expectations	92% –95%
Significantly below expectations	Below 92%

Please note if your child's attendance drops below 93% then our Family Learning Mentor will contact you.

As a school, we currently have attendance targets of 96%

Attendance Ladder

How close is your child to 100%?

0 days off school

100%

Perfection

Equates to 2 days off
school each year

99%

Excellent

Equates to 5 days off
school each year

97%

Good

Equates to 10 days off
school each year

95%

Slight Concern

Equates to 20 days off
school each year

90%

Concerned

Equates to 30 days off
school each year

85%

Very Concerned