

# Attendance at school – what do I need to know?

**Attendance** means going to school but can also include going to college or to another unit outside the school or visits or going on work experience or other activities organised by the school in school hours.

**Being off school:** Your child can be off school if there is a good reason. This can include if they are ill or if you have arranged permission from the school for them to be involved in an activity. There may be family circumstances which mean your child is off school. If you know that your child will be off school, for example if they have an appointment or important meeting to attend, please inform the school in advance.

**If your child is ill and will be off school you need to inform the school by phone or by a letter/note as early as possible on the first day your child is off.** Unless you have already contacted them to explain the absence your child's school will try to find out why your child is off school. Some schools will telephone you if your child does not arrive at morning registration. Because schools might do different things ask your child's school what they do. You need to keep your child's school up to date with your contact details. If your child will be off school with a long-term illness or condition you should discuss with the school how they will continue to support their learning.

**Holidays during term-time:** Schools will not normally give a family permission to take pupils out of school for holidays during term-time and will record it as unauthorised absence. There are some circumstances where this would be allowed, for example if a family needs time together to recover from distress or if a family holiday is restricted to term time because of the parent's job.

**Truancy:** If your child stays off school without permission or good reason this is called truancy. Sometimes truancy happens because the pupil is unhappy or struggling with their learning, or there is conflict with teachers or other pupils. As a parent it is important **you do not ignore, or agree with, or condone, truancy.** Schools must do what they can to find out why a pupil is truanting. If you have worries or concerns about your child's experience of school you should speak with the school directly. If you do not feel able to do this, or are unhappy with how your child's school is supporting your child, there are other agencies that can help.

**Personal support in school:** Every member of staff in a school is responsible for ensuring children are taking part in learning and the life of the school. If you have questions or concerns about the support your child is getting contact your child's school and ask to speak to someone who has responsibility for personal support or for managing additional support for learning. If you are nervous or worried about doing this get some advice or help from an agency listed on this poster.

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**Exclusion** is a last resort and should only be used to maintain safety and order for other pupils or for staff. If you are worried about the risk of your child being excluded, or want to know more about what support your child is entitled to if they are excluded, you can contact one of the helping agencies listed on this poster.

**When children do not attend school** an education authority can decide that they have done enough to support a child but a parent is not doing what they can. In these circumstances the education authority can use the law to insist that a parent does more to get their child to school; these are called **measures for compulsory compliance**. It is rare for these things to be used but it is important to realise that they can be used. **If they are, get advice!**

**For more details you can access the parent booklet on attendance at <http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk>**

If your child is anxious or worried about attending school please ask for support and help. As well as speaking to your child's school if you have questions or concerns there are a number of helping agencies listed here.

**ParentLine Scotland:** At some time all parents find that parenting can be difficult or stressful. ParentLine Scotland is the free, confidential telephone helpline for anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call about any problem, however big or small.

Phone: 0808 800 2222

On line at <http://www.children1st.org.uk/parentline>

**Parentzone** provides information for parents and carers about how you can support your child's education. On line at <http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk>

**ChildLine:** Children and young people can get confidential help about any question, concern or worry. Phone: 08001111 and on line at <http://www.childline.org.uk>

**Scottish Child Law Centre:** helps children and young people and their families by providing expert advice and information. Freephone for under 18s: Phone 0800 328 8970. Adults phone: 0131 667 6333

**Govan Law Centre** has a national specialist Law Unit on Education. It provides legal representation in appropriate education law cases to parents or pupils. Phone 0141 445 1955 or on line at <http://www.edlaw.org.uk>

**Enquire** is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. It has a helpline for parents and carers. Telephone helpline phone: 0845 123 2303 or on line at <http://www.enquire.org.uk>

**RESOLVE : ASL** is an independent service available in Scotland as an option to resolve conflict throughout additional support needs issues in education. More information and contact details at <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk>

**The Scottish Government 2009  
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