



What should I do if my child is absent from school?

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given.

- You are therefore required to contact the school immediately if your child is absent.
- You will be asked to provide medical evidence.
- The school office should be informed in writing of absences known in advance, such as dental appointments.
- If you wish to request a longer absence – which may or may not be authorised (see overleaf) – you will also need to complete a Leave of Absence Request from which is available from the main reception.

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ATTENDANCE

Believe. Achieve. Be proud.

Information for Parents and Carers

At The Downs Primary School and Nursery, we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment.

For all the children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school on time every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Our Attendance Policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively, in line with Government and Local Authority requirements, and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Working in partnership with parents / carers so that they are aware of their child's attendance record and the impact that this is having on their education.

The schools full Attendance Policy is available from the school office or the school website at: www.downsschool.com

Understanding different types of absence

Every half day absence from school must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required and it is a legal requirement. If we are unaware of the reason for your child's absence it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (e.g., hospital or orthodontist

appointments), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the Governing Body, following Government guidelines, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (Educational Welfare Service) using sanctions and / or legal proceedings including penalty notices and fines.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to be registered (after 9:15am)
- Shopping trips.
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Day trips.
- Holidays in term time.
- Parent appointments.

Holidays in Term Time

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 prohibits Headteachers granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an application has been made in advance, and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

At The Downs 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as: *being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.*

It is important for parents / carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

We will not agree leave during term time:

- At any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class as quickly as possible.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

The table below explains how attendance percentage affects your child's education. By displaying the percentage mark alongside the lost hours of learning for each school session missed gives a clear indication of the impact of being absent from school.

Description	Threshold attendance	Hours of lost learning
Unsatisfactory	91%	85
Serious cause for concern	86- 90 %	123.5 -95
Critical	85%	142.5

The current Government benchmark for attendance is set at 97%.