

How does occasional absence affect my child?

Missing occasional days from school may seem unimportant at the time; however, this can have a significant impact on your child in the long term. A pupil with 85% attendance is missing nearly half a term of learning time each school year. Regular absences can result in poorer outcomes over time. Research shows that pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school (which is between half and one day per week on average) stand only a 35% chance of achieving five or more good GCSEs, compared to 73% of those who miss fewer than 5% of school days. Late arrivals also add up over time – being 10 minutes late each day adds up to two weeks of lost learning time over the whole school year.

What happens if attendance becomes a concern?

Our first response will always be to understand the reasons for absence and work with families to improve attendance. However, where a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, the school must consider whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate. Ten sessions is normally equivalent to five school days. Decisions are made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Why won't the school usually authorise absence for a family holiday?

We recognise that family holidays during the school holidays can be expensive and that booking a cheaper term-time holiday may be tempting. However, headteachers can only authorise leave during term time in exceptional circumstances. This applies regardless of a child's previous attendance record.

Parents and carers should plan holidays around school holidays and avoid requesting term-time leave unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a family takes a child out of school during term time without the absence being authorised, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where the criteria are met, the school will issue a penalty notice (fine) in line with Nottinghamshire County Council's attendance guidance.

Penalty notices are issued to encourage regular school attendance and to ensure that children do not miss valuable learning time. Parents and carers should therefore be aware that taking a child out of school for an unauthorised term-time holiday may result in a financial penalty.

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents and carers can request leave of absence using our Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office.

Requests should be made as soon as possible and, wherever possible, at least 5 school days (1 week) before the absence is due to take place. We recognise that in some rare circumstances, this may not always be possible.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the individual circumstances and any supporting evidence. The decision to authorise leave of absence rests with the headteacher.

How do I request an absence in advance?

If you need to request authorisation for a planned absence, please complete our Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office.

Please submit requests as early as possible, as we may need to ask for additional information before making a decision. Please do not make any bookings or plans until you have received confirmation from the school that the absence has been authorised. Please remember that leave of absence during term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays will not normally meet this threshold.

Where a term-time holiday is taken without authorisation and the relevant criteria are met, the school will issue a penalty notice in accordance with Nottinghamshire County Council's attendance guidance.

Every Day Counts

A Family Guide to Attendance at John Blow Primary School



Why is school attendance important?

Good attendance gives children the best opportunity to learn, achieve and enjoy their time at school. Every school day matters. When children miss school, they can miss important teaching, practice and experiences, which can make it harder for them to keep up with future learning.

Regular attendance also helps children to feel part of the school community, develop positive relationships with their friends and adults, and feel settled and secure in school. Attending school regularly also helps children develop positive routines, habits and attitudes that will support them throughout their education and into later life.

What are our legal responsibilities?

In England, parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education and, where their child is registered at a school, to ensure that they attend regularly.

Schools are legally required to maintain accurate attendance registers and record the reasons for absence. Attendance must be managed in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance. When a child is absent, families should inform the school promptly and provide the reason for the absence. The school will decide how the absence should be recorded in accordance with the statutory guidance and the circumstances of the individual case. Where attendance becomes a concern, schools and local authorities are expected to work with families to identify barriers and provide appropriate support. Where support is not successful, is not engaged with, or is not appropriate, legal intervention may be considered.

Our school day:

Our school day begins at 8.40am, when the school gates open and children are welcomed into school for a 'soft start'.

The soft start provides children with a calm and positive transition into the school day.

From 8.40am to 8.50am, children come into school, settle into their classrooms and prepare for the day ahead.

At 8.50am, learning begins. Children complete a planned morning activity which helps them to settle, focus and engage with their learning. This is an important part of the school day and supports children to make a positive start to their morning.

We ask that all children arrive in time to be in their classroom and ready to learn by 8.50am. Arriving at the school gate at 8.50am does not allow sufficient time for children to come into school, settle and be ready for learning.

Our daily assembly begins at 9.05am. The 15 minutes between 8.50am and 9.05am are an important opportunity for children to complete their morning activity, connect with their teacher and classmates, and begin the day positively.

Every minute counts. A few minutes missed each morning can quickly add up over a term and can mean that children miss valuable learning time. We therefore ask families to make arriving at school on time part of their child's daily routine.

Please aim to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am so that your child is settled, in their classroom and ready to learn at 8.50am.

How do I report an unplanned absence to the school?

Unexpected absences should be reported to school via a telephone call, email (office@collingham.notts.sch.uk) or through the Scholar Pack app. Please report any absences at your earliest convenience as soon as you become aware that your child will be absent.

In the case of illness, the absence will usually be authorised unless there are grounds for concern that the illness may not be genuine or that it might not be sufficient to require time off school. In these cases, the school may ask for additional evidence, such as a doctor's note, appointment card, hospital letter or medical report. The school will not ask for this additional evidence unnecessarily.

If you do not provide a reason for your child's absence, we will make contact with you to find out why they are not in school. Unexplained absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Who should I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my child's attendance?

Ben Carver (headteacher) is the nominated lead for attendance; should you have any concerns or queries, please contact the school office. We have a pastoral pathway which is utilised to support the wellbeing needs of all learners including those whose attendance is of concern.

What are the different types of absence?

There are two broad categories of absence:

Authorised absence – where the school has accepted that there is a valid reason for the child not attending school and the absence is recorded as authorised in accordance with national guidance.

Examples may include:

illness or other circumstances where a child is unable to attend school;
certain medical or dental appointments where the appointment cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours;
religious observance where the legal requirements are met;
the death of a family member or other exceptional circumstances;
other circumstances where the school considers the absence to be unavoidable and appropriate.

Unauthorised absence – where the absence does not fall within the circumstances recognised by the school as appropriate for authorisation, or where no satisfactory reason for the absence has been provided.

Examples may include:

- holidays or other leisure trips taken during term time without exceptional circumstances;
- birthday celebrations;
- shopping trips or days out;
- waiting for deliveries;
- oversleeping;
- other avoidable absences.