

## What are the effects of Persistent Absence?

There's a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

Poor attendance can disrupt a pupils own learning and that of other students. It has a damaging effect on a child's education and work missed while a child is off school is never made up.

Students who attend school regularly are likely to leave school with more qualifications and increased access to employment opportunities than children with persistent absence

Children with persistent absence are at increased risk of involvement in crime, child exploitation and anti-social behaviour.

## What do Department of Education figures show?

- Only 10% of persistent absentees achieve 5 GCSEs at Grades 5 - 9 compared with 38% of occasional truants and 64% of regular attenders.
- 21% of persistent absentees had no qualifications, as opposed to only 3% of regular attenders
- Truants are more likely to offend and, of the group of young people offending, 66% had truanted.

## What are the consequences of Persistent Absence?

If a parent/carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school, they could be found guilty of a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

As part of the criminal investigation, parents/carers may be interviewed under caution. In accordance with the Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984, this may be recorded and could be used as evidence in court.

The parents/carers may be subject to legal proceedings in the magistrates Court.

## What are the outcomes of legal proceedings?

If you are found guilty, magistrates can impose a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months imprisonment. Parents/carers may also be ordered to pay substantial legal costs.

If convicted, parents/carers could get a criminal record.

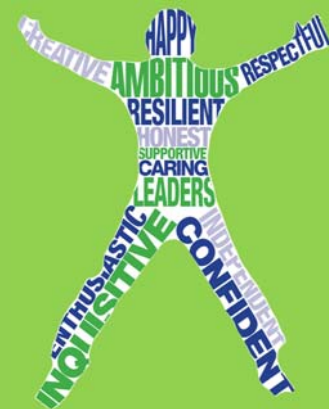
The court has the power to direct the child to be brought before a Family Proceedings Court.

Statutory Defence include:

1. School grants leave of absence
2. Sickness/unavoidable cause
3. Day exclusively set apart for religious observance

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Day Matters

Persistent Absence  
A guide for  
parents and carers



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## Why is there a law about poor school attendance?

The law is there to protect children who have poor school attendance.

Unauthorized absence from school can be a cause for concern in relation to child welfare, safety and protection.

Under the Education Act 1966, parents and carers have a legal duty to secure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school.

As well as being a legal requirement, it also ensures your child has access to the best start in life and that they are able to benefit fully from the education they are entitled to receive.

Good attendance is vital in enabling pupils to maximize the opportunities available to them.

## Absence?

A pupil is defined as a "Persistent Absentee" if they miss 10% or more of all possible school sessions, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised..

## What does good school attendance look like?

We take absence seriously. We identify students whose attendance falls below 95% and provide supportive intervention to improve this.

We run attendance challenges throughout the year to help students maintain and improve their attendance.

Please do not let your child miss out on the education they deserve.

Every school day counts.

It is vital that parents/carers work with schools when a child is near the 10% persistent absence threshold to prevent emerging patterns of absence.

## If your child does not attend school they will not achieve

We want all students to achieve high levels of attendance and give themselves the very best life chances and choices.

**There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments.**

There should be little need, except in "exceptional circumstances" for your child to miss a day's education.

90% attendance may look impressive but it means they miss 19 days of education in a school year and risk dropping one grade in their GCSEs.

