

## What happens if the legal process goes to Court?

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can impose a Parenting Order, which means that parents must attend a counselling and guidance program, usually a parenting class.

## When is absence authorised?

There may be occasions where absences are authorised by the school. If you are concerned about your child, contact the school in the first instance and arrange a meeting to discuss the needs of your child.

If your child is unwell, you should notify the school immediately and follow the school's absence procedures.

Wherever possible, you should make routine appointments e.g., dental check-ups during the school holidays or after school hours. Schools have the right to request medical evidence to validate absences for medical reasons.

If you feel you must take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school and refer to the school's attendance policy for guidance. Absences will only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. The decision on whether to authorise absence is made at the headteacher's discretion.

---

For more information, please contact the Education Inclusion Service:  
Telephone: 01452 427274  
Email: [attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning)

# School Attendance



## Information for Parents and Carers

Updated May 2023

## Why is good attendance important?

Good school attendance is vital for children's success in the future. Being in school every day that it is open is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. Time in school also keeps children safe and provides access to extra-curricular opportunities and pastoral care.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may:

- struggle to keep up with schoolwork
- have few opportunities to catch up on missed learning
- miss out on the social side of school life
- miss opportunities to make and keep friendships

## What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child?

Research shows children who are not regularly attending school are:

- more likely to become involved in or be a victim of crime and antisocial behaviour
- more likely to fall behind due to the strong link between attendance and achieving good results
- less likely to achieve 5 good GCSE's (grades 9-5) compared with those with fewer than eight days' absence
- more likely to have increased levels of anxiety due to inconsistencies and uncertainty in their routine
- more likely to have reduced self-esteem due to finding learning increasingly hard having missed out on important information.

## What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

**Once your child is registered at a school, you are responsible for making sure they attend regularly.**

## What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

**If your child fails to attend school regularly or if they miss school without you knowing, the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.**

School will notify you if your child's attendance level is a concern and work with you and your child to improve it. They may meet with you to agree a Parenting Contract. If attendance continues to require improvement, then the school will look to initiate an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM).

The AIM is the beginning of the legal process. It is important that you engage with the process and work with the support provided to meet the agreed targets. These targets will be reviewed, and progress evaluated at a review meeting. If satisfactory progress is made, then targets will be considered met or adjusted until attendance is satisfactory. If progress is not made, then you may be referred to the LA for legal intervention.

You risk being issued with a Penalty Notice or being prosecuted in court.