

School attendance and absence.

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Parents' responsibilities

Make sure your child has good attendance

- From starting at nursery, teach your child the importance of good attendance and getting to school on time every day
- Show an interest and ask about what they're doing at school
- Encourage them to take part in school activities
- Encourage them to tell you about any problems they may have at school - let their teacher or headteacher know about anything serious
- Don't let them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not stop you from going to work
- Where possible, make appointments after school, at weekends, or during school holidays
- Try to take family holidays outside of term time

You can find more information at GOV.UK about your [responsibilities for improving your child's attendance.](#)

What can happen if your child doesn't attend school regularly

Referral to education welfare service

If your child has an unacceptable level of attendance at school, which the school can't resolve, the school may refer your child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

The EWO will provide support to you and your child, and to the school. This is to make sure that your child gets a full-time education appropriate to their needs. This may be either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

If you're worried about your child's attendance, contact the Education Welfare Officer through your child's school.

You could be fined up to a maximum of £1,000 (for each child) for failing to make sure that your child attends school regularly.

If you've already been found guilty of failing to make sure that your child attends school regularly, your fine could be increased to £2,500 or a three month prison sentence.

Legal action

Parenting orders

If your child doesn't attend school regularly, the court could give you a parenting order. This will help you to correct your child's behaviour and failure to attend school. You may have to attend a parenting programme, counselling or guidance sessions for up to three months. You'll get support and advice on making sure your child attends school regularly. Breach of the order is a criminal offence.

If your child has ten sessions or five full days of unauthorised absence in any one term, you may be issued with a penalty notice. You'll also get a fine of £60 if you pay within 21 days, or £120 if you pay within 28 days.

Education supervision order (ESO)

If your child continues to have poor attendance at school, they can be made the subject of an ESO. This means that an Education Welfare Officer will support you and your child. This is to make sure that their attendance at school improves and that they're properly educated. The conditions of the ESO could mean that you'll have to attend meetings at the school, or parenting classes. You'll also have to keep us informed if you or your child change address.

ESOs usually last for a month. If your child's attendance doesn't improve in this time, or you don't co-operate, you'll be referred back to court. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500. You could also be referred back to social care, who will consider applying for a higher order, which could include care proceedings.

Fixed penalty notices

Leave of absence - taking your child out of school in term time

If you take your child on holiday in term-time without the school's consent, you'll receive a fine of £60 for each child. If you don't pay this within 21 days, it will be increased to £120. You'll need to pay the increased fine within 28 days or court action can be taken against you.

Unauthorised absence

Penalty notices may be issued in the following circumstances: truancy, parentally-condoned absences, excluded pupils found in a public place during school hours, and persistent late arrival for school. As the liable parent, you'll receive a formal warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued. You'll be given 15 school days to improve your child's overall school attendance.

School attendance legislation

- [Section 444 \(1\) Education Act 1996](#)

- [Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- Children and Young Persons Acts [1933](#), [1963](#), [1989](#)
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Related guidance

- [Exclusion of pupils from school](#)
- [DfE Guidance on exclusion from mainstream school, academies and pupil referral units](#)