

STUDENT ABSENCE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



WORK HARD



MODEL
KINDNESS



AIM HIGH



Every Day Counts

Why Regular Attendance Matters

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in helping children achieve their full potential, both academically and personally. As parents and carers, we all want our children to be happy, confident, and successful.

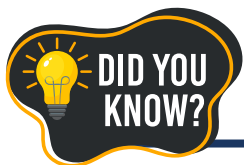
Every school day provides valuable learning opportunities, helping children build knowledge, develop skills, and grow in confidence. When children attend school consistently, they are better able to keep up with their learning, participate fully in lessons, and make steady progress throughout the year.

School is also about much more than academic achievement. It is where children develop friendships, learn important social skills, and become part of a supportive community. Regular attendance helps children feel connected, secure, and engaged in school life.

Good attendance habits established from an early age can benefit children throughout their lives. Being present, punctual, and ready to learn helps develop the responsibility, resilience, and reliability that are valued in further education and future employment.

Even a small number of absences can add up quickly over the course of a school year. We understand that there are times when children are genuinely unwell and need to stay at home. However, wherever possible, we encourage families to prioritise school attendance and work with us to ensure children benefit from every learning opportunity available to them.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child attend school regularly and arrive on time each day. By working together, we can give every child the best possible chance to thrive, achieve, and enjoy their education.



Every lesson in school matters. Regular attendance helps students build confidence, make progress, and achieve their full potential. Missing lessons can make it harder for children to keep up with their learning.



What Does the Law Say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent or carer, you are responsible for ensuring your child attends school regularly and on time.

Once your child is registered at school, parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that they attend regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to support children's learning, wellbeing, and future success.

Schools and the Local Authority work together to promote good attendance and provide support where families may be experiencing difficulties. If a child's attendance becomes a concern, we will work in partnership with parents and carers to understand any barriers and help improve attendance.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that children receive their education and that parents meet their legal responsibilities. In cases where attendance remains a concern despite support being offered, further action may be considered in line with national attendance guidance.

More information regarding the local authorities stance on attendance can be found on their website.



[Kirklees: Attendance](#)



[Email: education.safeguardingservice@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:education.safeguardingservice@kirklees.gov.uk)



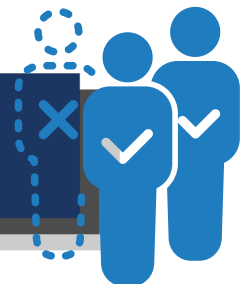
Absence Procedures

At Whitcliffe Mount Academy, we are committed to working closely with pupils, parents, and carers to support excellent attendance. We know that regular attendance gives children the best opportunity to succeed academically, develop positive relationships, and make the most of every aspect of school life.

We also recognise that there can be a variety of reasons why attendance may sometimes be challenging. If you are experiencing difficulties that are affecting your child's attendance, we encourage you to speak to us as early as possible. By working together, we can identify any barriers and provide support where needed.

Our shared goal is to ensure that every child attends school regularly, feels happy and supported, and has every opportunity to achieve their full potential both now and in the future.

Reporting a Student Absence



Please notify school before 8:30am each morning of every day that your child will be absent:



Telephone: 01274 851152 (Ext 1)



Arbor App: [Quick Actions - Attendance - Log Absence](#)



Email: wma.attendance@sharemat.co.uk

Parents or carers of children who are absent, and who do not receive a present mark during form time without the school being notified, will be sent a text message informing them of their child's absence.



What Should I Do If My Child is Poorly?

We understand that there will be times when children are genuinely too unwell to attend school. However, many common illnesses and minor ailments can be managed whilst remaining in school, helping pupils to continue their learning and maintain good attendance.

Symptoms such as coughs, colds, sore throats, runny noses, headaches, and period pain do not usually require a child to stay at home. Where appropriate, pupils can bring prescribed or authorised medication to school and manage their symptoms throughout the day. In some circumstances, attending school later in the day, once medication has taken effect or symptoms have improved, may be a suitable option rather than missing the entire school day.

We recognise that some pupils may experience longer-term or ongoing medical conditions. Where attendance is affected by a medical issue, we are committed to working with families to provide support. To help us understand and appropriately support your child, the Attendance Team may request evidence of prescribed medication, medical appointments, or advice from healthcare professionals.

If your child is too unwell to attend school, we would encourage you to seek advice from your local pharmacy or GP, particularly if symptoms persist or become more severe. Medical advice can help ensure your child receives the appropriate treatment and can return to school as soon as they are well enough.

Our priority is to support every child to achieve the best possible attendance while ensuring that those who are genuinely unwell receive the care and support they need.



IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you the school has your up to date contact details. It is important that school staff can contact you during the day if your child is not well enough to remain in school.



Minor Aches and Pains

Persistent toothache or earache can be extremely uncomfortable and may require medical attention. If your child is experiencing ongoing tooth pain, we would encourage you to arrange a dental appointment as soon as possible. Similarly, persistent earache should be assessed by a GP or other healthcare professional.

However, many minor ailments can often be managed without missing school. A mild headache, period pain, cough, cold, or runny nose would not usually prevent a child from attending. Where appropriate, pain relief or other suitable medication can be given before school to help manage symptoms and support attendance.

If symptoms worsen during the school day, pupils can speak to a member of staff who will assess the situation and contact home if necessary. We encourage families to consider whether a child is well enough to learn, rather than symptom-free, before deciding to keep them off school.

Vomiting and Diarrhoea

If your child is experiencing vomiting or diarrhoea, they should remain at home until they are feeling well enough to return to school and are able to eat and drink normally.

If symptoms persist or your child's condition does not improve, we would encourage you to seek medical advice from your local pharmacy, NHS 111, or your GP surgery.

As a school, we recognise that every illness and every child is different. We do not automatically enforce a 48-hour absence period following sickness or diarrhoea. Instead, we ask parents and carers to use their judgement and ensure that their child is well enough to participate fully in the school day before returning. Once your child is eating normally, feeling well in themselves, and symptoms have settled, we would welcome them back to school.

High Temperature

If your child has a high temperature of 38°C or above, they should remain at home until their temperature has returned to normal and they are feeling well enough to take part in their usual school activities.

A high temperature is often a sign that the body is fighting an infection, and rest may be needed while symptoms improve. If your child continues to have a fever or their condition worsens, we recommend seeking advice from your local pharmacy, NHS 111, or your GP surgery.

Once your child is fever-free and feeling well enough to learn, we encourage a prompt return to school to minimise disruption to their education.



Hospital & Surgical Care

If your child has a medical condition that requires hospital treatment, surgery, ongoing medical care, or recovery support, please ensure that you inform the school as soon as possible. This also includes pupils who are wearing a cast, have stitches, or have any temporary medical restrictions that may affect their participation in school activities.

To help us provide the appropriate support and accurately record attendance, we ask that parents and carers share any relevant documentation, such as hospital discharge paperwork, appointment letters, treatment plans, or advice from healthcare professionals.

Keeping the school informed allows us to work together to support your child's wellbeing, ensure any necessary adjustments are made, and maintain accurate attendance records.

Medical & Dental Appointments

We encourage parents and carers to arrange medical, dental, and other routine appointments outside of school hours wherever possible, as every lesson really does count.

We understand that this is not always possible. If your child needs to attend an appointment during the school day, please notify the Attendance Team in advance and provide a copy of the appointment letter, text message confirmation, or other supporting evidence. We are unable to accept notes written in planners as evidence of medical appointments.

Where possible, we ask that pupils attend school before and/or after their appointment. For example, if an appointment takes place in the morning, your child should return to school afterwards, and if it is later in the day, they should attend school beforehand. This helps to minimise the impact on learning and ensures that pupils benefit from as much teaching time as possible.

If you need to report an appointment or discuss your child's attendance, please contact the school directly so that the Attendance Team can support you.



What If My Child Is Anxious?

It is normal for children and young people to feel worried or anxious about school from time to time. This may be due to friendships, exams, changes in routine, or other challenges they are experiencing. In most cases, these feelings are temporary and can be overcome with the right support.

While it can be tempting to allow a child to stay at home when they are feeling anxious, attending school is often one of the most effective ways to help them build confidence, maintain routines, and reduce their worries over time. Being in school enables children to stay connected with their friends, teachers, and support networks, all of which play an important role in their wellbeing.

We have a dedicated Wellbeing Team in school who provide a range of support for pupils experiencing anxiety or emotional difficulties. Throughout the week, the team delivers targeted sessions, interventions, and individual support to help students develop coping strategies, build resilience, and feel more confident in school.

If your child is experiencing ongoing worries or anxiety about attending school, please contact the Attendance Team. By speaking with us, we can work together to understand your child's needs and arrange any appropriate referrals to our Wellbeing Team or other support services. Early intervention often makes a significant difference and can help prevent worries from becoming a barrier to attendance.

Our aim is to work in partnership with families to ensure that every child feels safe, supported, and able to thrive both academically and emotionally.

LINKS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



YOUNG MINDS
fighting for young people's mental health



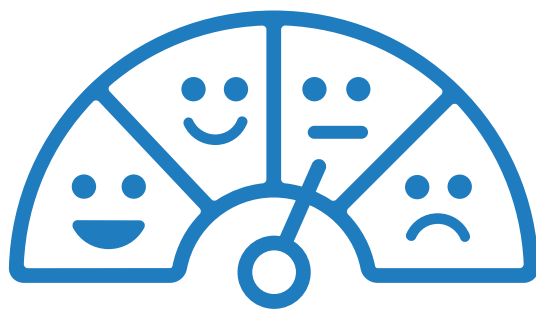
Anna Freud
building the mental
wellbeing of the
next generation





Emotional Based School Avoidance

Understanding School Avoidance



REASONS FOR ABSENCE



School avoidance is often underpinned by several factors rather than one singular cause. This could include something going on for the child within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, changes in family dynamics, bullying, friendship issues, etc.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE



You may notice patterns in regular absences or your child regularly expressing that they do not wish to attend school. In children who are neurodiverse, there is evidence to suggest that there are more aspects of school life which may cause distress - such as changes to the environment, routine or sensory stimuli.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for their development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG TERM OUTCOMES



The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. For example - reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS



There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. This can include tummy aches, headaches, or saying that they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with a GP first to rule out any medical causes or issues.

Impact Of School Avoidance

CYCLE OF ABSENCE



Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity making them anxious and increasing their desire to remain at home.

How Can I Help?



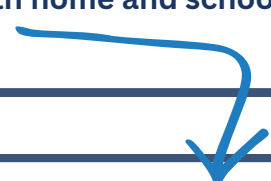


How Can I Help My Child With EBSA?



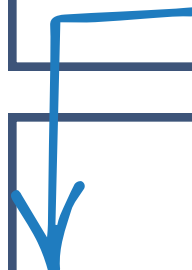
WORK TOGETHER

If there is a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it is important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so that we can take a child - centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for your child.

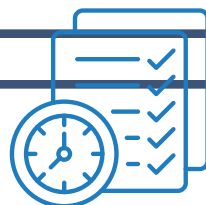


MANAGE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

Acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss coping strategies together to help them manage difficulties they are facing. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk. This helps them to understand that you are working together towards a common goal, and that these strategies can be used when bigger feelings arise.



FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES



Children can benefit from regular and consistent routines. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A Consistent evening routine which is calm and spent away from screens can also give your child much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for their school day, if required.



RECOGNISE POSITIVE STEPS



Drawing attention to their successes - might they be big or small - can help to give them some much needed confidence and motivation. Celebrate the daily victories - such as getting out of bed on time or by completing their school work on time. Do not hesitate to let the child know when you are impressed or proud of them. This approach can go a long way.



Term Time Holidays

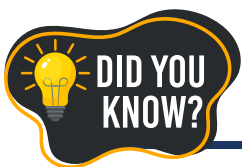
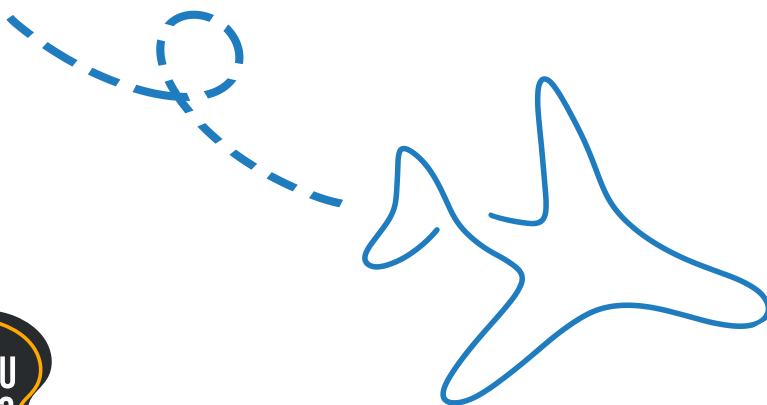
Term-time holidays **are not tolerated and should not be booked under any circumstances** other than those deemed exceptional by the school. All family holidays must be arranged during designated school holiday periods.

Absence from school during term time can have a significant impact on a child's education and social development, as important learning opportunities and classroom experiences may be missed. Children who are absent may also find it challenging to catch up on missed work upon their return.

Any request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the school and will be considered on an individual basis. Please note that holiday requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for any other absence should also be made in writing to the Attendance Officer, clearly outlining the reason for the request.

Leave of Absence Form



Term-time holidays are not automatically authorised. Headteachers can only approve leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, so families are encouraged to plan holidays during school breaks whenever possible.



Fixed Penalty Notices

From 19 August 2024, the national framework for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) changed. A Fixed Penalty Notice may now be issued when a child has accrued 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10-school-week period. This threshold can be met through any unauthorised absence and is not limited to term-time holidays.

We ask all parents and carers to be mindful of their child's attendance and to ensure that any absence from school is properly authorised. The updated Fixed Penalty Notice framework is outlined below.

FIRST OFFENCE

This is the first time a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for a term time holiday or irregular school attendance. This penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

SECOND OFFENCE

Where it is deemed appropriate to issued a second Fixed Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Fixed Penalty Notice will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child within 28 days - there is no reduced fee for paying early. Unpaid Fixed Penalty Notices may result in parental prosecution.

THIRD OFFENCE

On the third time that an offence is committed for either Term Time Holiday and/or Irregular Attendance a Fixed Penalty Notice **will not** be issued.

The case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of **'Failure to send a child to school'** the Magistrates can impose a **fine up to £1000**. Other prosecution tools may also be considered.



What Is Good Attendance?

At Whitcliffe Mount, we are committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to achieve their full potential through regular school attendance. Good attendance is closely linked to academic success, positive wellbeing, and future opportunities in education, employment, and training.

Research shows that students whose attendance falls **below 90%** are more likely to underachieve, with some studies suggesting this can lead to a reduction of at least one GCSE grade. Regular attendance also helps students build positive relationships, develop routines, and prepare for the expectations of adult working life.

We encourage all students to aim for **100% attendance** and ask parents and carers to support us by ensuring their child attends school every day, on time, unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing them from doing so.





My Child's Attendance Is Below 95%

When a student's attendance falls below 95%, we will begin to monitor their attendance more closely. In the first instance, this will be addressed by their Personal Development Tutor, who will meet with the student to discuss their attendance and may contact home to offer support.

The purpose of this early intervention is to identify and address any barriers that may be affecting attendance before they become a more significant concern. We encourage parents and carers to work closely with us and share any information that may be impacting their child's attendance. Open communication enables us to provide the right support at the earliest opportunity and helps ensure that every student can attend school regularly and achieve their full potential.

If attendance does not improve and continues to decline, parents and carers may receive communication from the Attendance Team inviting them to attend a formal attendance meeting. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss any ongoing concerns in more detail and to identify the barriers that may be preventing a student from attending school regularly.

Our aim is always to work in partnership with families to provide the appropriate support and guidance needed to improve attendance. We are committed to helping every student access their education whenever possible, ensuring that missed learning is kept to a minimum and that they are able to make the most of the opportunities available to them.



IMPORTANT: If you are concerned about your child's declining attendance or wish to discuss any barriers with us, please reach out!



wma.attendance@sharemat.co.uk



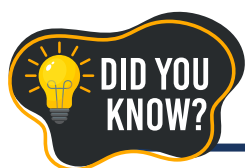
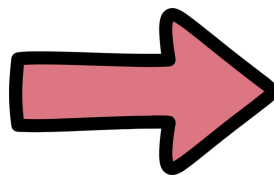
My Child's Attendance Is Below 90%

If attendance continues to decline and falls into the red zone (below 90%), families may be placed on a formal Attendance Contract. This support programme typically lasts for 12 weeks and includes reviews every four weeks. During each review, attendance targets will be agreed and families will be expected to work with the school to achieve these targets.

The purpose of the Attendance Contract is to provide structured support and to identify any further interventions that may help improve attendance. However, if attendance does not improve sufficiently during this period, the school may need to refer the case to the Legal Intervention Panel for additional support and consideration.

At this stage, parents or carers may be invited to attend a formal interview under PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act). Following review by the panel, a range of legal interventions may be considered, including the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order, or an Education Supervision Order.

Our priority throughout this process is to work in partnership with families to ensure that every student receives the education they are entitled to and is able to attend school regularly.



Families can self-refer to Kirklees Families Together by scanning the QR code above. This provides access to a wide range of support services for children, young people, and families.



Who Can I Speak To About My Child's Attendance?

The Attendance Team



Mrs J Piper
Attendance and Punctuality Lead
jade.piper@sharemat.co.uk



Mrs L Murphy
Attendance Administration Officer
laura.murphy@sharemat.co.uk

The Heads of Year



Miss N Donaldson
Head of Year 7
natasha.donaldson@sharemat.co.uk



Miss P Johnson
Head of Year 8
paris.johnson@sharemat.co.uk



Mrs L O'Brien
Head of Year 9
lynne.obrien@sharemat.co.uk



Mrs R Spencer
Head of Year 10
rachel.spencer@sharemat.co.uk



Miss A Young
Head of Year 11
alice.young@sharemat.co.uk

You may also contact your child's personal development tutor via email.