

## **Why is attendance at school so important?**

As parents, you want the best for your child and for them to do well. Therefore a good education is important to ensure that they have the best possible opportunities in their adult life.

They only get one chance at school, and your child's future may be affected by not attending school or alternative provision regularly.

If your child does not attend school regularly they may struggle to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up. They will also miss out on the social side of school life.

Poor attendance can affect your child's ability to make and keep friendships which is a significant part of growing up. By setting good attendance patterns from an early age this will help your child later on in their life.

For those children with a poor attendance record, they may have less chance of securing a job when they are adults. Being on time is just as imperative - arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the other children in the class and their teacher.

## **What might the impact of poor attendance be?**

In Primary Schools, less than 65% of children achieve good results in English and maths with an average of 15 days of absence a year. Those children with an average of less than 8 days of absence achieve almost 90%.

It can be surprising for parents on how quickly your child can accumulate several days of absence a year so we would ask you to always bear this in mind.

## **What does the law say?**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 18) must receive 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. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you. The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.

If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons

with us as soon as possible. There are short absences from school that would be accepted which include a family bereavement or taking part in a religious observance but missing school due to holidays and birthdays is not acceptable.

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

We are responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to ensure your child attends schools regularly. You are at risk of being issued with a penalty notice and potential prosecution.

## **What about authorised absence?**

There may be times when your child must miss school because they are unwell. This is to be expected and we ask that you inform the school on these occasions. There may be times when your child needs to attend a medical or dental appointment during school time. We ask, where possible, to arrange these times out of school hours.

In some situations, requests for term time leave with exceptional circumstances are authorised.

## Why attendance counts:

If your child achieves 100% attendance they have attended school every day. However, if they have been absent during the year this is what it equates to:

- 90% attendance - attending 4½ days a week = 4 weeks missed per year
- 80% attendance - attending 4 days a week = more than half a term missed per year
- 70% attendance- attending 3½ days a week = more than a quarter of the school year missed
- An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school journey adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school.
- Being late for school reduces learning time. If your child is 5 minutes late every day, they will miss 3 days of learning each year.
- If your child is 15 minutes late every day, they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year.

## Reporting an absence

If your child is unwell or will be absent from school for any other reason, please inform the School Office at the earliest opportunity:

Telephone: 01278 422786

Email: [Sch.059@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Sch.059@educ.somerset.gov.uk)

Please make sure you give the reason for your child's absence when you contact the office as we follow the HPA guidance for schools on illnesses. For some conditions there may be an exclusion period to reduce the risk of spreading.

If you have any questions regarding your child's attendance please contact the school office or speak to the class teacher.

Please make sure that your contact details are up to date with the office. As part of our safeguarding role we need to hold 2 points of contact for children and we may need to contact you if your child becomes unwell during the school.



# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Bridgwater



## School Attendance Information for Parents