

Attendance Matters - Frequently Asked Questions

Why does school attendance matter?

Missing a few days of school here and there may not seem a big deal, but research shows that it can have a significant impact on children's learning.

Children who miss a substantial amount of school fall behind their peers, and struggle to catch up.

Friendships can be affected by persistent absence, too: it can be hard for a child who misses lots of school to form relationships with their classmates.

What counts as good attendance?

As a school we ask that students achieve at least 96% attendance. We recognise that for some this may be a challenging target, therefore we will provide additional support to students and their families to encourage excellent attendance (please see our Attendance Policy to view our intervention strategy for students).

Persistent absence (PA) is defined as an attendance rate of 90% or below.

What absences are not authorised?

Certain types of absence will be marked as unauthorised. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher, time off for holidays is always unauthorised.

Absences where the parents haven't given the school a reason are also recorded as unauthorised.

If your child is late to school and the registers have closed, they will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Please note the school day is made up of two possible sessions AM and PM, so if your child misses the AM session it is possible to still receive a PM mark.

What happens if your child's absence is not authorised?

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence and legal action may be taken by the Local Authority.

If your child continues to miss school, legal action can be taken against you.

What to do if your child is ill?

If a student is going to be absent from school due to illness, then a parent or carer must inform the school via the Studybugs app. www.studybugs.com.

The parent/carer will need to explain fully the reason for their child's illness. We are unable to accept single word responses such as unwell or ill.

Parents/Carers will need to send this message by 8:30am each day their child is absent. Failure to report a child's illness before 8:30am may result in a truancy message being sent home, phone calls from the attendance team and an unauthorised absence mark.

If a parent/carer does receive a truancy message, they must reply swiftly to support the safeguarding procedures the school is required to follow.

The Headteacher may require further evidence to authorise an absence and if this is the case the attendance team will be in contact. Medical evidence will be required in cases of illness which are 5 continuous days or longer.

What to do if my child has an appointment?

Where possible, parents are required to arrange appointments outside of school hours, e.g. dentist, doctor. If this is not possible, parents should notify the Attendance Team prior to the appointment by emailing attendance@arthurterry.bham.sch.uk.

When emailing the attendance team please include any appropriate evidence to support the absence such as:

- Medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- An appointment letter from a professional such as a hospital Consultant or Psychologist
- Print screen of a text message appointment

If evidence is not provided, then the absence may be marked as unauthorised until evidence is provided.

If your Son/Daughter needs to leave school due to illness or has a medical appointment they will need to be collected by a Parent/Carer which is registered on our system. We are unable to release students without the presence of a Parent/Carer

Does Arthur Terry reward good attendance?

Yes, we use various methods to encourage good attendance. These include awards ranging from certificates to prizes for good or improved attendance.

