



Date: 11 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Information for Parents and Carers About School Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential to help children achieve their potential. It enables children and young people to develop positive relationships, support their wellbeing and prepare them for adult life. Missing school can affect a child's learning, confidence and future opportunities.

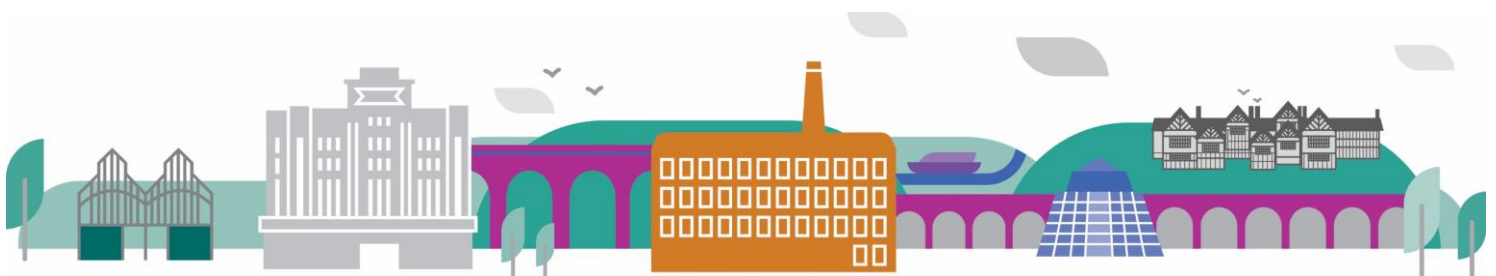
The Department for Education published a report ([Link between attendance and attainment - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk)) that showed that children who missed just 10 days of their Year 6 were less likely to meet the expected standard of learning in reading writing and maths by around 25%. In Year 11 the pattern is the same. Those who attended nearly every day were almost twice as likely to achieve a Grade 5 in English and maths compared those who missed just 2 weeks over the year. These patterns show that attending school every day really can make a difference to your child's outcomes and future life chances.

We recognise that children and families can experience challenges that affect school attendance. Stockport schools are committed to a support-first approach and will work with families to understand and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. This support is most effective when parents and carers actively engage with the school, attend meetings, share relevant information, and work together on agreed actions. Where support is offered, families are expected to participate fully so that the right help can be put in place at the right time, and children can access their entitlement to education.

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full-time education and attend school regularly. While schools and the Local Authority will always seek to work with families and provide support where appropriate, continued unauthorised absence may result in legal action, including the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

National guidance requires schools and local authorities to consider formal action where attendance does not improve, or where support offered is not engaged with. The type of action taken will depend on the individual circumstances, and may include a Notice to Improve, an Attendance Contract, an Education Supervision Order or a Penalty Notice.

The formal action may be considered where a child has 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period. Unauthorised absence can include term-time holidays,





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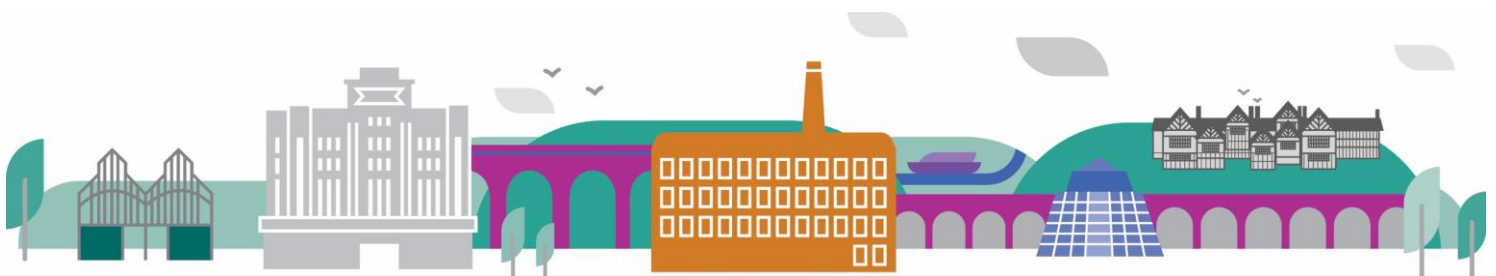
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absences that have not been authorised by the school, and persistent lateness after registers have closed, as such lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Every day matters. Thank you for your support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and is able to make the most of their education.

Kind regards,

Lynn Perry
Director of Education



Ambitious Stockport, creating opportunities *for everyone*



Information for Parents and Carers About School Attendance

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is attendance important?

Missing school can affect a child's learning, friendships, wellbeing and future outcomes. Every day in school counts.

What should I do if my child is absent?

Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep them updated if the absence continues. Information regarding the school process can be found in their attendance policy on the schools website.

Can schools ask for medical evidence?

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases. Schools are not expected to routinely request that you provide medical evidence to support illness absences, and should not have blanket rules requiring this. In the majority of cases, your notification that your child is too ill to attend school can be accepted without question or concern. However, schools may request reasonable evidence where they have genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or when they are seeking to support your child with prolonged or repeated patterns of illness. In such cases, medical evidence may play a role in supporting schools to better understand your child's health needs. Schools should work with you and other agencies to identify barriers to attendance and put support in place to address them, inform what reasonable adjustment may need to be made and/or to accurately record absence in the attendance register. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Headteachers can only authorise leave in exceptional circumstances. Holidays in term time are not normally authorised.

What is unauthorised absence?

This can include:

- Unauthorised holidays;
- Absence without a satisfactory reason;
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed (U code);
- Failure to provide an explanation for absence.

When can a Penalty Notice be issued?

A Penalty Notice may be considered where there are 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) within a rolling 10 school-week period.

Who can receive a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent of a child with unauthorised absence, including any adult with day-to-day care of the child.

What support is available?

Schools can help identify barriers to attendance and may offer attendance support, pastoral support, Early Help, health services, or other appropriate interventions.

What if attendance does not improve?

Where unauthorised absence continues despite support being offered, the Local Authority may consider enforcement action, including Penalty Notices or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Who should I contact if I am worried about my child's attendance?

Speak to your child's school as early as possible. Early conversations often help prevent attendance concerns from escalating.