

## How parents/carers can help their child have good attendance?

- From starting at nursery, make sure your child arrives at school on time, every day. If your child has to miss school it is vital that you let the school know why, preferably on the first morning of the absence. (All schools will have an attendance policy explaining how this should be done).
- Show an interest and attend parents meetings, concerts and other school events and ask about what your child is doing at school.
- Encourage your child to take part in school activities.
- Don't let your child 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. Remember, a morning appointment does not mean a whole day of absence. Bring your child back to school in the afternoon.
- Take family holidays during school holiday time only. Schools publish term time dates well in advance – use these to plan your family holiday.
- Encourage your child to tell you about any problems they may have at school. If you know or think that your child is having difficulties attending school you should contact the school straight away.
- Find out regularly your child's attendance and absence record and check that this matches with your own records.
- Acknowledge, praise and reward good or improved attendance, even small successes.

- **90% attendance =**  
½ day missed every week!
- **One school year at 90% attendance =**  
4 weeks of learning missed!
- **Over 5 years of school =**  
½ school year missed!
- From September 2015, all children and young people whose school attendance is 90% or below are considered to be persistent absentees.

“Of pupils who miss between 10-20% of school, only 38% manage to achieve five or more GCSE grades A\*-C, including English and Maths.”

Department for Education

### For further information

For information on school-related attendance, please contact your child's school and ask to speak to the Attendance Lead.

For all other attendance enquiries please contact Access and Engagement Services on:

📞 0207 527 3747

@ PupilServices@islington.gov.uk

## Improving Pupil Attendance in Islington: The Role of Parents/Carers

Good attendance at school is the single most important factor in ensuring that children and young people have the best opportunities in adult life.

Good attendance means...  
being in school at least  
96% of the time

- 365 days in the calendar year
- 175 non-school days a year! (all this for shopping, holidays and appointments)

96%  
and above =  
best chance  
of success

Below  
90% = serious  
impact on  
education and  
reduces life  
chances

90-95%  
= less chance  
of success

## It's your responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure their child receives a suitable education. Most parents/carers do this by registering their child in a school.

If a child is registered at a school they must by law attend that school regularly and punctually. Children should only miss school if they are ill or unable to attend for some other unavoidable reason.

If a child is absent and the school either does not receive an explanation from the parent/carer, or considers the explanation unsatisfactory, it will record the child's absence as 'unauthorised', and the parent/carer could be at risk of receiving a penalty notice or being prosecuted.

Promoting positive school attendance is everyone's responsibility



## Most absences for acceptable reasons will be authorised by the school:

- Illness.
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments (if possible, these should be arranged for after school or during school holidays).
- Day of religious observance.
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement.
- An interview with a prospective employer or college.

## Some of the following examples are reasons why a school may NOT authorise absence:

- Shopping during school hours.
- Day trips.
- Birthdays.
- Looking after brothers or sisters or ill relatives.
- Term-time holiday.
- Caring for a disabled parent.

Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school is a criminal offence. If, with support from the school's attendance officer and/or the Local Authority, the child's attendance fails to improve, the school and/or Local Authority will consider any of these courses of action:

- Issuing a penalty notice (fine).
- Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.
- Application for an Education Supervision Order in the Family Proceedings Court.
- School Attendance Order.

"Young children don't play truant from school, they are off because their parents allow it."

**Charlie Taylor**  
Government's expert advisor on attendance and behaviour

