

Every Day Counts.....

Somerset County Council is committed to providing all children with the best start in life and works hard to ensure that all children in Somerset attend school regularly.

Reducing absence from school is a key priority both for Somerset and the Government. The majority of parents in Somerset ensure that their children attend school regularly.



Tackling Absence:

- Increases children and young people's opportunities;
- Increases children's attainment and achievement;
- Makes children safer;
- Reduces anti-social behaviour;
- Reduces the risk of children becoming involved in crime;
- Reduces the risk of children getting involved in alcohol and substance misuse;
- Makes Somerset a safer place for everyone

Further Information:

Somerset County Council's Education Attendance Officers offer support and advice about your child's school attendance.

To get in contact with your Education Attendance Officer please contact your child's school or contact Somerset Direct on:

0845 345 9122

School Attendance

Information for Parents and Carers

Produced by the Children & Young People's Directorate, Somerset County Council.

For additional copies, please visit:

www.somerset.gov.uk

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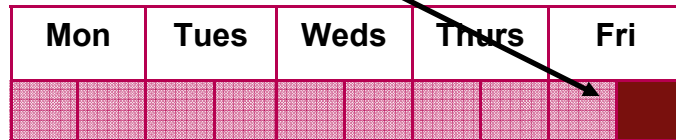
Why does attendance matter?

Attending School on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good routines for later life and the working world, as well as giving your child the opportunity to:

- Make lots of friends and feel included.
- Learn new things and develop many skills.
- Increase confidence and self esteem
- Improve social skills
- Achieve potential and fulfil aspirations.

90% Attendance

Peter is a child who attends school for 90% of the time. His parents think this is quite good. Peter is absent from school for the equivalent of one half day a week.



Over a whole school year Peter would miss four weeks of lessons. Peter would also spend more time away from school over the year than in school!

Days in a Year:	Days spent in school:	Days spent out of school
365	171	194

If Peter's attendance for his whole time at school was 90% he would have missed 209 days of school, that's a whole school year!

N.B. When "Parent" is referred to in this leaflet, we are referring to Parents and Carers

When your child is absent

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given.

Only the Headteacher can officially authorise an absence, but unless there is a concern, the staff will usually do this on his/her behalf.

Parents should provide reasons for absences and the school must decide whether or not they justify authorisation according to Government Guidelines.

Authorised Absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil;
- Hospital/dental appointment for the pupil;
- Death of a near relative;
- Religious observance (faith of the parents / carers)

Unauthorised Absences

- A shopping trip;
- A birthday treat;
- Oversleeping due to a late night;
- Looking after other children;
- Letting the gas man in, etc.

Whenever a child is absent from school the parent should:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If no notification of absence is received, the school office will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Where possible let the school know in advance of any planned absences e.g. hospital appointments.
- Where possible make medical/dental appointments out of school hours

Term Time Holiday

Family holidays should take place during the school holiday dates. These are published a year in advance. Please be mindful that absence due to a holiday is not, and never has been a parent's entitlement.

If a holiday in term time cannot be avoided, a holiday form should be completed. These can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will then decide whether or not to authorise this absence. This will depend on many factors including the pupil's record of attendance, whether they will miss any examinations, whether the holiday exceeds ten school days etc.

Arriving late to school

When a child arrives late to school it can be very disruptive to your child, the teacher and other children in the class. If your child arrives late to school they will be marked as late on the register. If your child arrives very late, the child will be marked as an "Unauthorised Late" - This is the same as an Unauthorised Absence.

Absence and the Law

As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. The details of Parents with children who have unauthorised absence (including those who have taken an unauthorised holiday) will be passed to the school's Education Attendance Officer, who could consider issuing a Penalty Notice or starting legal action.