



Every Child. Every Day. Every Opportunity.

Parent Attendance Guide 2026–27

At Holly Primary, we believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility.

We know that most children want to attend school, achieve their potential and enjoy being part of their school community. Sometimes families face challenges that can make attendance difficult. When this happens, our priority is to work alongside families to understand barriers and provide support.

Our schools are committed to:

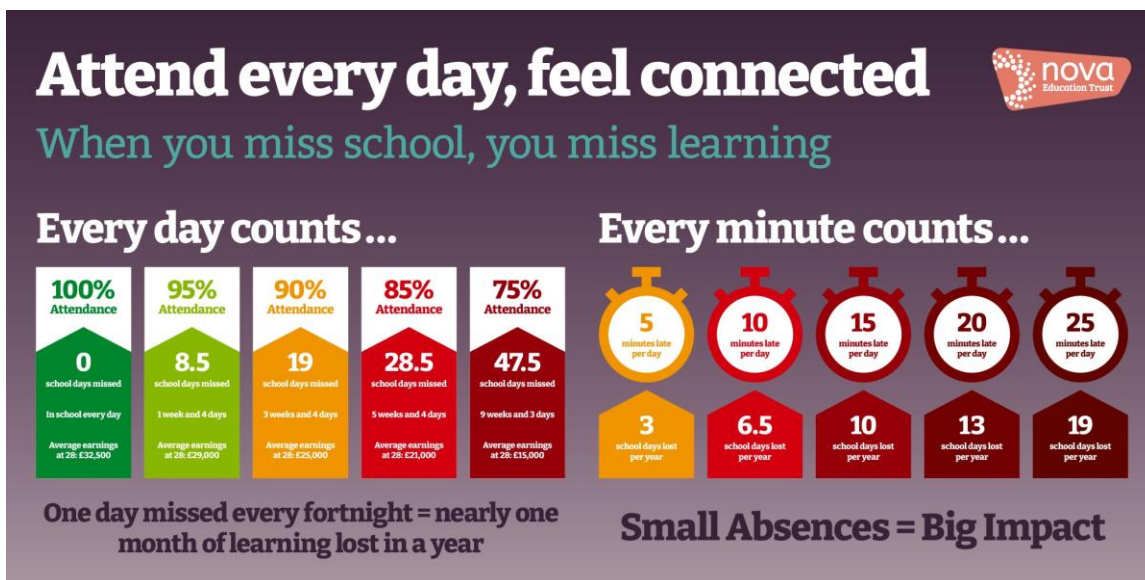
- Building positive relationships with children and families
- Identifying concerns early
- Removing barriers to attendance
- Supporting wellbeing and belonging
- Ensuring every child has the best opportunity to learn, develop and thrive

WHY ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Missing school can have a significant impact on learning, friendships and wellbeing.

Missing just:

- 1 day every fortnight = approximately 19 days each year
- 2 days every fortnight = approximately 38 days each year
- 90% attendance = around 4 weeks of learning missed every year



Good attendance helps children to build confidence, develop friendships, keep up with learning, improve wellbeing and achieve good outcomes for the future.

Every day counts.

WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS CAN DO

- Establish good bedtime and morning routines
- Encourage a positive attitude towards school
- Arrive at school on time every day
- Contact school when difficulties arise
- Attend meetings when support is offered
- Work with school to overcome barriers

UNDERSTANDING ABSENCE

Authorised Absence may include illness, medical appointments, religious observance, exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher and agreed educational activities.

Unauthorised Absence examples include term-time holidays, no explanation for absence, medical appointments without evidence, attendance difficulties without engaging with support and additional days around events or holidays.

What will be counted as an unauthorised absence?	What can be done to help in this situation?
Colds, coughs, headaches, nausea, hay fever, sore throats, migraines, cold sores or conjunctivitis, feeling sick/unwell	• Please check the NHS guidance: "Is my child too ill for school?" • Let the school know your child is feeling ill so we can monitor them in school, if the illness is minor. • Please give them doses of recommended medicine before school, for mild illnesses. • If your child has been diagnosed with migraines by your GP, please let the school know. • If your child feels unwell in school, they should report to the Student Engagement Office and a trained First Aider can support them (children must never use their phones to contact parents to say they need picking up).
Period pains*	• Parents/carers are expected to work in partnership with the school where menstrual-related absence becomes recurrent or persistent, so that appropriate support can be identified, reasonable adjustments considered, and access to healthcare advice encouraged to minimise the impact on attendance and wellbeing. • If parents do not engage with support then absences may lead to unauthorised absences.
No communication at all from a parent or carer	• Parents and carers have a duty to call in and explain their child's absence. • For family emergencies, please ensure you contact us about your situation, and we will offer support.
Unevidenced medical appointments (doctors, dentist, etc.)	• You can send in a screenshot of appointment confirmations.
Holidays	• Please always book holidays during the school holidays only.
Feeling tired after a weekend sports fixture, other extracurricular event or enrichment activity.	• Inform the school that your child is tired. We can monitor and support in school.

Physical injuries that could be catered for in school	• If your child has a physical injury, contact the school for support on how they can attend.
Your child refuses to attend school	• Call our Attendance Team immediately and we can offer support. • If your child is experiencing friendship issues, or is worried about a past incident, send them to school and let us know. We can best support your child when they are in school.
Head lice and nits	• Please treat your child's hair with a medical shampoo and call school to let us know.
Low mood or anxiety	• Call our Attendance Team immediately and we can offer support. • If your GP, or other medical professional, has expressed concerns about your child's mental health, please contact school for support
Sunburn	• Please apply appropriate after-sun cream and give doses of appropriate medicine. Contact us if you need further support.
Unevidenced and unagreed sporting/musical activities	• All external sporting/music activities must be evidenced and agreed by the Head Teacher.
More than one day for religious observance	• Children are granted 1 day for religious observance. • Further absences would be unauthorised.
Lack of uniform or item is missing or broken	• We can provide your child with spare uniform for the day/week to ensure they do not miss learning. • If you require financial support, we can help. Please contact your child's Head of Year/Class Teacher to enquire about what support can be provided.
Collecting students from school without a valid reason.	• School will contact you if it is felt that they need to be collected. For example, an injury that needs to be assessed by a medical professional. • If your child feels unwell in school, they should report to Attendance Team and a trained First Aider can support them (children must never use their phones to contact

	parents to say they need picking up). School will contact you if they feel they are too unwell to be in school.
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TERM-TIME LEAVE

Headteachers can only approve leave during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Examples that may be considered exceptional:

- Significant family bereavement
- Funeral of a close family member
- Serious medical emergency involving the child or immediate family member
- Rare and unavoidable events that cannot take place during school holidays

Examples unlikely to be exceptional:

- Family holidays
- Cheaper travel costs
- Birthdays
- Family visits abroad
- Extending school holidays

LOCAL AUTHORITY REFERRAL PROCESS

1. School identifies a concern.
2. Support is offered.
3. Attendance remains a concern and may be referred to the Local Authority.
4. Local Authority reviews the case.

PENALTY NOTICE FAQ

A Penalty Notice may be considered when there are 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 school-week period or where an unauthorised holiday is attached to a school closure period.

Can a referral be made below the threshold?

Yes. The Local Authority may still consider action where there are repeated unauthorised holidays or persistent unauthorised absences.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

My child says they have a headache. Should they stay at home?

In many cases, children can attend school with minor ailments such as headaches, mild colds or hay fever.

Please refer to NHS guidance and contact school if unsure.

My child is anxious about attending school. What should I do?

Contact the school as soon as possible.

We can provide support, listen to concerns and work with you to develop a plan.

Avoid keeping your child at home without speaking to school first.

My child has SEND. Can support be provided?

Yes.

We work closely with families, SEND teams and other professionals to identify reasonable adjustments and support attendance.

What happens if my child is absent and I forget to call the school?

School staff will contact you to check your child's welfare and establish the reason for absence.

Will school carry out home visits?

Sometimes.

Where we cannot establish the reason for absence, or where there are safeguarding concerns, schools may undertake a home visit to ensure children are safe and well.

What if my child is off because of their mental health?

We recognise that mental health difficulties can affect attendance.

Please contact us as early as possible so that appropriate support can be put in place.

HOW WE CAN HELP

If attendance is becoming difficult, please contact your school's attendance team.

We can help with:

- Attendance concerns
- Anxiety and school avoidance
- Medical needs
- SEND-related attendance barriers
- Family support
- Early Help referrals
- Reintegration following absence

Our approach is supportive, inclusive and child-centred.

Together we can help every child attend, achieve and thrive.