

Singleton C of E School



Good School Attendance Guide

Helping your child to make the most out of school.



Introduction

Good School attendance habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents set the standards and expectations for your child.

Showing your child the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but also helps them to keep and sustain friendships and enjoy the school environment.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

The staff at Singleton School are there to support you, they understand the difficulties some parents can face and will work with you. Trust the experience of the class teacher and other school staff and share with them any concerns you may have. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch! Remember children can be tired when coming out of school, so a short chat over a snack may produce a better result than a long list of questions.

If your child raises anything that concerns you, it is much better to raise it with your child's school, usually the class teacher, at the earliest opportunity. Allow the school the opportunity to address any concerns or difficulties. This often can help put your mind at rest, know that your child is ok and is doing well in school.

At Singleton School, we want all children to have a positive experience of school life and be able to reach their full potential. One way in which parents can help their child to do this is by ensuring they attend school **every day**. Parents can often feel that more time is spent at school than at home. By completing a quick and easy sum, we can see just how many days children attend school.

- There are 365 days in the year and 190 days in the school year.
- If we take, the days in school away from the days in the year we see that for 175 days children are at home with their parents.
- If a child takes leave of absence during term time, 10 school days, attendance starts to fall to only 180 days in school.
- If the child is then ill for five or more days in a year, they start to be at home more than they are in school.

Absence from school

As the parent you are responsible for ensuring that once your child is registered at a school that they attend regularly and punctually. Starting good habits earlier on is much easier than trying to change poor attendance habits, battling with your child to attend school and struggling to get out of the door on time. Be organised, have a plan, be consistent and involve your child.

School absence falls into one of two categories;

- **Authorised**, those which schools can give you permission for
- **Unauthorised**, those which they will not.

Examples of Authorised Absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital / dental appointment for the pupil
- Death of a near relative
- Religious observance (Faith of the parent / carer)

Examples of Unauthorised Absence:

- Sickness of a parent, or other family member
- Inadequate clothing for school
- Child being used as a carer
- Problems with transport
- Non urgent medical treatment - e.g. dental check-up, doctors' appointments for minor ailments. - these should be made for after 3pm when school finishes.
- School refusal or truancy

- Days off for birthdays, shopping trips
- Family Holiday

Whilst as a parent you may think you can give your child permission to be at home, **you cannot**. The only person who can give permission for a child to be absent from school is the school's **Headteacher**.

During school hours the school staff are legally in *loco parentis* and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. If a pupil has to leave school for any reason during the school day, the parent / carer must contact the school with an explanation. Pupils leaving the school site during the day must sign out at the school office.

Whenever a child is, absent from school, the parent / carer should:

- Contact the school before 9:20am on the first day of absence. If your child will be absent from school, you must notify them by telephone call on the first day of absence before 9:20am
- If no notification of absence is received, the school office will contact the parent / carer to ascertain the reason
- You should then follow this up with a note once the child returns to school.
- The school's Head teacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, depending upon the reason given.

Most childhood sickness that prevents school attendance will be classed as authorised absence. However, if your child is frequently absent from school due to sickness, we will ask that you provide medical evidence otherwise; we will stop authorising the absences and potentially seek advice from the Local authority or request that you come in for a meeting with the Head teacher and the Family Learning Mentor. This does not mean that as a school we do not believe you or your child, but that we want to do the best for you by ensuring your child can attend school as much as possible. We will do this by providing extra support such as accessing the school nursing team if needed or explore options such as attending school just in the mornings and resting in the afternoons.

Reduce absence due to medical reasons by making non-urgent medical appointments for your child outside of school hours. Always let your child's school know the type of illness your child has that prevents them attending at the start of the school day. They will guide you as to whether your child needs to be absent from school all day and when they should be expected to return.



The importance of good attendance

Attendance during one school year	Equals absent days	Which is approximately weeks absent	Which is this is the number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children that have high levels of absence struggle with friendships, confidence and self-esteem. They also often feel that they have been left behind in aspects of learning, which often results in them not wanting to come to school.

Help support your child and your school by keeping absence rates down. Children who are frequently absent are usually those who fall behind and find it hard to keep friendships, which can lead to being unhappy in school.

The importance of arriving on time



School Times

- Children are welcome to come into school from 8.45am and must be in their classrooms ready for the register by 8:55am and not just coming through the school door.
- In Y5/6 Mr Goostry provides morning maths support from 8.45am and encourages all pupils to arrive by this time.
- Lunchtime registration is at 1:00pm.
- School finishes at 3:00pm.

When a child arrives on time:

- Registration takes place quickly and smoothly
- An activity is put on the board or out around the classroom
- The day gets off to a good start for everyone
- Everyone hears the information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected of them

When a Child Arrives Late:

- It interrupts concentration
- It wastes valuable learning time
- The teacher repeats information / instructions whilst others have to wait
- The late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed important teaching points, missed discussions where ideas are shared and will be generally unsettled
- Children feel stressed and anxious about having to walk into their lessons late, some children find being late very distressing.

What happens if a child arrives late?

- If the child arrives after 8:55am they will have to enter school via the front entrance as playground gates are locked at 8:55am.
- On arrival at school they must be accompanied to the school office by a **parent / guardian** and **signed** in by the parent in the school **Late Book** with an explanation as to why they are late.
- This is monitored by the Family Learning Mentor, she then reports directly to the Head and the Governing Body.
- If a pattern arises of children regularly arriving after 8:55am then parents will be invited in to school to discuss this and the attendance team at L.C.C. may be informed.
- If children arrive after 9:00 a.m. they will be marked late.

Collection

- All children **must be picked up at 3pm**; our staff have a variety of commitments after school -running clubs, staff meetings and courses and it should not be assumed that they are available to supervise children after this time.
- If a child is not collected on time then they will be put into Kids Club and you will be charged accordingly.
- **Late collection will be monitored by the Family Learning Mentor.**
- At 3pm, the children become your responsibility and it is imperative that you collect on time.
- Being collected late causes unnecessary anxiety and upset for children.

Full details of the Drop off and Collection Policy are available on the school website <http://www.singleton.lancs.sch.uk/>

Holidays in term time

Since September 2013 head teachers have only been able to grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. As a rule of thumb, a family holiday or travelling abroad is not considered to be an exceptional reason.

Your children get 14 weeks holiday a year!

There are **38 weeks** in the year when schools are open, and **14 weeks (175 days)** when families can visit family overseas; go on holiday; travel; pupils can work, take educational trips, attend non urgent medical appointments.....**So is your request for leave exceptional?**

The new legislation means that as of 1st September 2013 Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are “exceptional” circumstances to warrant the granting of leave. Fixed penalty notices **may** be served to parents who take their children out of school when authorisation has been denied. Penalty

notices are fines that can be issued to parents by the Local Authority for their child's irregular school attendance. The notice will state the fine payable and the timescales for doing so (if paid within 21 days £60/ £120 if paid within 28 days). All payments are made to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices provide an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence by paying the penalty.

Lancashire County Council attendance department explained the following examples are classed as exceptional circumstances:-

- Parents in Afghanistan - who miss school holidays
- Police - Whose annual leave certain, can dictate, circumstances i.e. Riots/ critical incident, where annual leave holidays were all cancelled.
- Parents whose holidays are inflexible - in this circumstance parents would have to give schools the contact names of their employers to clarify this. (e.g. where a factory closes down for a set date a year and holidays cannot be taken out of this time)

As a result of these changes the Governing Body has made the following changes to our school attendance policy;-

- Holidays will not be authorised in term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
- The new County recommended up dated "request for leave" forms will be used and these can be obtained from the school office.
- All applications for "exceptional circumstance" leave must be made 6 weeks prior to the requested leave. All requests are considered by the SHE committee which meet monthly and school also needs time to carry out the administration related to verifying the "exceptional circumstance." (e.g. contacting employers for information)
- The decision will be made by a representative of governing body in consultant with the head teacher but the more stringent requirements shall be enforced.
- **Parents may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the application for exceptional leave.**
- Parents will be informed by letter as to the outcome.



Attendance information for parents

Significantly above expectations = **Above 99%**

Above average expectations = **97%-99%**

Average = **95% - 97%**

Below expectations = **92% - 95%**

Significantly below expectations = **Below 92%**

Please note if your child's attendance drops below 93% then our Family Learning Mentor will contact you.

As a school we currently have attendance targets of 96%

Attendance Ladder

How close is your child to 100%?

0 days off school

100%

Perfection

Equates to 2 days off school each year

99%

Excellent

Equates to 5 days off school each year

97%

Good

Equates to 10 days off school each year

95%

Slight Concern

Equates to 20 days off school each year

90%

Concerned

Equates to 30 days off school each year

85%

Very Concerned