

Why is there a law about poor school attendance?

The law is there to protect children who have poor school attendance. Unauthorised absence from school can be a cause for concern in relation to child welfare, safety and protection. Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a legal duty to secure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school. As well as being a legal requirement, it also ensures your child has access to the best start in life and that they are able to benefit fully from the education they're entitled to receive. Good attendance is vital in enabling pupils to maximise the opportunities available to them.

What is persistent absence?

A pupil is defined as a 'persistent absentee' if they miss approximately 10% or more of all possible school sessions, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

What does good school attendance look like?

We take absence seriously. We identify students whose attendance falls below 96% and provide supportive intervention to improve this.

- Please don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve
- Every school day counts
- It is vital that parents or carers work with schools when a child is near the 10% persistent absence threshold to prevent emerging patterns of absence

If your child does not attend school, they will not achieve

We want all students to achieve high levels of attendance and give themselves the very best life chances and choices.

There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments.

There should be little need, except in **exceptional circumstances**, for your child to miss a day's education. Attendance of 90% may look impressive but it means they miss 19 days of education in a year and risk not achieving what they are capable of in primary school SATs. In secondary school it can mean dropping one grade in their GCSEs.

SATs outcomes may be below the expected level meaning pupils are not as 'secondary-ready' as they could be.

A grade 4/5 GCSE becomes a grade 3.



What are the effects of persistent absence?

There's a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Poor attendance can disrupt a pupil's own learning and that of other pupils. It has a damaging effect on a child's education and most of the work missed while a child is off school is never made up. Pupils who attend school regularly are likely to leave school with more qualifications and increased access to employment opportunities than children with persistent absence. Children with persistent absence are at increased risk of involvement in crime, child exploitation and antisocial behaviour.

What do DfE figures show us?

Pupils with no absence are 1.3 times more likely to achieve expected levels or above, in primary SATs, and 3.1 times more likely to achieve greater depth levels than pupils that missed 10-15% of all sessions.

Only 10% of persistent absentees achieve five grade 9-4 GCSEs compared with 38% of occasional truants and 58% of regular attenders.

21% of persistent absentees had no qualifications, as opposed to only 3% of regular attenders.

Truants are more likely to offend and, of the group of young people offending, 66% had truanted.

