

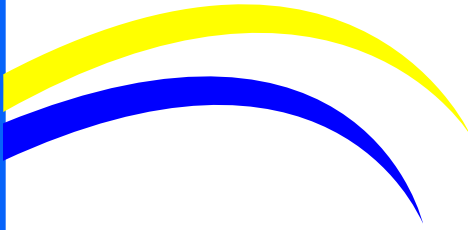
Children do better when  
they go to school all day,  
every day .

# Smithdon Cluster Attendance Information



They learn better  
They make friends better  
They have a brighter future





## IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT

- You must contact the office to inform school that your child is absent on the first day of illness
- If your child is likely to be absent for a number of days please let school know this as soon as possible and again on the third day of absence

## Continued Attendance Issues

If there are continued attendance issues and things don't improve, the school may use the Fast Track procedure to take further action which could result in legal proceedings.

## School attendance, absence and your child

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 (20 days) of lessons. Bearing in mind that children only attend school for 190 days each year, 4 weeks of absence would mean Peter spent more time away from school over the year than in school!

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!

### Regular school attendance - why it's so important

Going to school regularly is important to your child's future. For example, children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

### Preventing your child from missing school: what you can do

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems they may have at school - inform their teacher or headteacher about anything serious
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work
- Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school. Under normal circumstances, you should not expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

## HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Holidays in term time can seriously impact on your child's education and we actively discourage you from taking your child out of school.

The new government guidelines say that headteachers have the discretion to grant leave but only in exceptional circumstances. This leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

**'Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school'**

July 2013, DFE

Any requests for absence should be addressed by writing a letter to the headteacher, stating the exceptional circumstances and length of leave. The headteacher will consider all requests and reply accordingly.

Our schools will not authorise absences if they believe it is to be to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods.

If absence is not authorised and you should still take your child out of school this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and could result in legal proceedings being taken.



## School attendance and absence: the law



By law, all children of compulsory school age (five to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school - though some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted.

## Support on school attendance

There are many different issues which can affect school attendance. Examples include problems with:

- Bullying
- housing or care arrangements
- transport to and from school
- work and money

Talking to your child and their teachers could help to solve any difficulties you have in getting your child to go to school - and there are other forms of support available if you still have problems.

## Support from the school

Your child's school is the first place to go to discuss any attendance problems. We will try to agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance.

## Support from your local authority

Your local authority can also help if you are struggling to ensure that your child goes to school. Potential forms of support include:

- home tuition for children with long term and recurring illnesses, so they do not fall too far behind
- support to help reduce the burden on children where families are in difficulty (for example, if a child is spending a lot of time caring for someone) working with families and schools to overcome bullying and other serious problems

## Parenting contracts

If your child is missing school without good reason, one option the school or local authority might suggest is a parenting contract.

A parenting contract is a voluntary written agreement between you and either the local authority or the school's governing body. Parenting contracts aren't a punishment - they're used to help you and the school or local authority work together to improve your child's attendance, and get you access to practical support. Under the contract you agree to do certain things - for example, ensure that your child arrives at school punctually every day.

If your child is not attending school regularly, however, and you refuse to agree to a contract or do not keep to its terms, this can be used as evidence if the local authority decides to prosecute you.

Information source: [www.directgov.uk](http://www.directgov.uk)



## Attendance

The Smithdon Cluster has an agreed joint policy for attendance.

The cluster consists of the following schools:

Smithdon High School,  
Brancaster Church of England Primary School  
Dersingham Infant and Nursery School  
Docking Primary School and Foundation Unit  
Heacham Infant and Nursery School  
Heacham Junior School  
Hunstanton Infant School  
Ingoldisthorpe C. of E. Primary School  
King George VI Primary School  
Redgate Junior School  
Sedgeford Primary School  
Snettisham Primary School  
St. George's Junior School

