



Why is it important for children not to miss school?

All parents want the best for their children and for them to get on well in life. Having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life. They only get one chance at school, and your child's future may be affected by not attending school or alternative provision regularly. If children do not attend school regularly, they may

- Struggle to keep up with work due to them missing previous lessons.
- Miss the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from Nursery through primary school will also help your child later in their life. Children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of securing a job when they are adults.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, their teacher and the other children in the class. Some parents may be finding it difficult to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local authority. As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice of being taken to court. The Local authority may decide to prosecute a parent. If this happens: Parents can be fined up to 2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

What is the difference between authorised and unauthorised absences?

There may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. This is to be expected and you should follow the school's procedures for notifying illness. The school will record such absences as authorised. However, the school will unauthorise an absence if the reason is not appropriate. Unauthorised absences are counted towards making a referral, which could lead to prosecution.