

When is it alright for my child to be off school?

Your child can be off school if:

- They are ill.
- They are attending a doctor or other medical.
- They are going to a meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or if they are going to a Children's Hearing, care review or court.
- Someone close to your child has died.
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family.
- They are going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them.
- You are a Gypsy/Traveller family and while you go travelling you keep in touch with your child's teacher.
- If they are involved in an activity and the school agrees in advance.

As long as you have informed the school of the reason why your child is off, and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called **authorised absences**.

Summary of steps schools will use to monitor attendance

Attendance	Summary	Action
Between 90-95%	Begin to monitor absence	Start to review attendance more closely.
Below 90%	Scrutinise absence	Scrutinise attendance closely If no known reason - further action will be taken – see below:
	Take action	The designated member of staff will make initial contact with family Consider additional support requirements for family in or out of school. Consider multi-agency response depending on needs/reasons for absences Continue to monitor and follow up attendance

Just Think... If your child has **90% attendance** they will have the equivalent of:

- ◆ ½ a day off per week
- ◆ 19 days off per year
- ◆ 247 days off over their school career
= to over 1 year of lost education.



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Education Leisure
and Housing

**ATTENDANCE
MATTERS**

*Is your child missing
out?*

A guide for Parents/Carers
on school attendance.

What does the law say about school attendance?

All children and young people enrolled at local authority schools should attend regularly and should not be absent without a reasonable reason. Schools are expected to monitor attendance and take action which should include contacting the family of any child or young person not attending regularly, to help resolve any problems. If your child continues to be regularly absent from school, the law says that you may be guilty of an offence. (Under section 35 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980)

What do I do if my child is going to be off school?

Parents/carers must follow the school's procedures for reporting an absence. It is important that you contact the school when your child is ill. As **schools have a legal obligation to know where pupils are at all times** they cannot just 'assume' they are still poorly when they are not at school and parents/carers need to keep in regular contact. There may be exceptions, eg prolonged periods of ill health but parents/carers should have a dialogue with their child's school on these occasions so plans can be made to support children and young people.

What should I do if my child is anxious or worried about going to school?

Your child has a right to an education and to feel safe and happy at school.

Unfortunately, some young people can be anxious or worried about going to school for a range of reasons. It is really important that you speak to school if this kind of problem arises so that a solution can be worked out which ensures the best outcome for your child.

Why is school attendance so important?

From the beginning of your child's school journey, excellent attendance is important.

It allows children and young people to learn, make friends, experience new things and develop new skills; good attendance helps them to understand responsibility, learn about the world they live in, build confidence and gain qualifications.

For further information

Included, Engaged and Involved – Part 1; a guide to school attendance, Scottish Government, 2007 <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/205963/0054747.pdf>

'A guide for parents about school attendance', Scottish Government, 2010 <https://www2.gov.scot/resource/doc/294630/0091104.pdf>

Factsheet 9 'School attendance'; Enquire, August 2016 <http://enquire.org.uk/20100622/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/school-attendance.pdf>

What happens if I do not contact the school?

If schools have not received a call before the agreed time, parents/carers will be contacted. This is to explain the absence and ensure the safety of our young people.