



News from the Nest

16th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers, Children and Families,

I am delighted to see all children back after the summer holiday.

School attendance and safeguarding remains a priority. It is compulsory that all children **should attend school regularly**. Failing to attend school on a regular basis could be considered a safeguarding matter.



As a school and in line with the DFE document, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', we have been assessing our procedures, monitoring attendance individually as well as looking at the overall whole school picture. Any child who has **95% or below attendance** is classified by the government as being 'persistently absent'. If you have any worries or issues that are having an impact on your child/ren's attendance, please contact school to speak to Hannah Smith our School Attendance Champion, Tracey Cadman our School Family Support Worker or our Attendance Support Officer, Kim Jones. We are more than happy to support you as a family to improve attendance.

One of the key factors in supporting a child in having good attendance is by maintaining good communication between school and home. This is successfully done by:

- Ensuring your child attends school on-time each day. (See the table below for the impact absence can have upon a child's education.) **Remember - start of the school day is 8:40am. The register is completed and closed at 9am. Remember - Breakfast Club is available from 8:20am.**
- Contacting school when your child is absent and report any medical issues. (See contact details below.)
- Providing evidence of illness when at all possible so that we can authorise absence - for example, doctors or medical appointments.
- Try to book general medical or dental appointments either outside of school hours, close to end of day or bring your child back into school after their appointment.
- Reporting any changes to personal information including address or emergency contact numbers.
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time. **There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.** Leave of absence cannot be granted unless you as families can prove 'exceptional circumstances'. All applications must be made in writing at least **4 weeks** prior to the requested leave date. (Please see our Attendance Policy on the school website for details or ask at the main school office). Whilst we support all of our children taking part in wider enrichment experiences, prioritising children's learning in school is key to them achieving educational success in the future. We have created an 'Attendance Road Map' which explains the policy and procedures for taking time off school. You must also make sure that your child's attendance is at a 'gold standard' (97% - 100%). Each case will be reviewed as part of the child's overall attendance, and if necessary, **further referral action to proceed to fine will be taken. Religious observance is authorised for 1 day only, if further days are required a leave of absence form should be completed.**

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one typical school year (190 days)	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed (6 per day)
95%	10 days	2 weeks	60 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	Over 100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	Over 220 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	Over 300 lessons

Thank you for your on-going support regarding promoting good attendance and punctuality - both important life skills that provide a successful future for your children. Good attendance will ensure that your child can reach his/her full potential. To help us in supporting your child to achieve this, your child needs to attend school every day.

As always, take care,

Hannah Smith - (DSL & Attendance Champion) and the Safeguarding Team
PTO - just a little reminder about our NEW Attendance Road Map

Useful Contacts:

School Website:
www.wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk
School Email:
info@wrens-nest.dudley.sch.uk

Attendance Roadmap

Wren's Nest Primary School



In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024), we will continue to offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. **We will continue to offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all.** We will assess data to identify absence trends and use preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand and support them, enabling us to remove barriers together. Where needed, we will formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts, and as a last resort, we will consider intensifying support and/or enforce legal sanctions.

Did you know, good attendance increases academic success?



STEP 5 - Legal Action - No Improvement

Legal action (Penalty Notice or Prosecution) **MAY** be requested from the Local Authority (LA) if Unauthorised Term Time Absence is taken, or if overall absence continues to occur and reaches or exceeds the National Threshold for absence, despite STEPS 1-4 being attempted. Statutory Guidance States a Referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'Severe Absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'Intense Support'.

STEP 4 - Warnings - Concerns Remain

Where STEP 2 or STEP 3 support has been unsuccessful and/or declined, a 'Formal Warning' if Attendance Contract (AC) or a 'Notice to Improve' Letter has failed, will be issued to reinforce the need for immediate improvement. A Family Court Order such as an Education Supervision Order will also be considered as an alternative to prosecution.



STEP 2 - Early Absence Support

We move to this step if the National Threshold for absence is met (authorised or unauthorised) to prevent further absence occurring. Discussions and meetings will be offered to identify if early support or reasonable adjustments are needed. This will be done using discussions &/or meetings to create a supportive action plan. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) may be required for some support to be accessed along with a Team Around the Family (TAF) Meeting Process

STEP 3 - Formalised Support

Where absence continues and initial support needs to be increased, an Attendance Contract (AC) will be offered to formalise support. This is a 3-6 month nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation. Achievable and individual targets will be set and reviewed regularly. Medical and/or other information will be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with you and other agencies. An AC can run alongside other meetings e.g., TAF meeting.

Potential Penalty Notices

1st Offence (after 19th August 2024) of Term Time Leave and/or Irregular Attendance (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.

2nd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction available.

3rd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to **Magistrates' Court** under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

STEP 1 - Identify, Assess and Prevent

Our daily actions and processes aim to promote relationship building with children and families to prevent absence. This involves monitoring data trends and absence patterns to inform our conversations with you (and your child where age allows). The trigger for conversations is where absence is at risk of reaching the new National Threshold (10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10 week rolling period). Other daily actions involve promoting attendance positively, using praise and incentives, swift absence follow up, email or letter communication to raise your awareness of emerging concerns, processing requested or unrequested 'Term Time Exceptional Absence' and doing Home Visits to meet our safeguarding duties as required.

Please talk to us about how we can support you and your child at any time.



Did you know, arriving after the register has closed (30 mins from school starting) = an absence?



Did you know, 90% attendance = approx. 95 missed lessons/hours of learning?



Did you know, 90% attendance = 4 weeks of absence over a year?

