

Ready to use attendance content

The following examples can be used in schools' communications with parents when and where you feel it is appropriate. This is content that can be used and adapted in a range of different scenarios including letters/emails, newsletters, on social media, or face-to-face communication.

Illness and medical appointments

Not sure if your child is well enough for school? Check the NHS guidance: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> [or attach the NHS poster provided in this guide]

For example, if they've got a runny nose, slight cough or headache but no high temperature, they can usually still attend if they are otherwise well – and we'll keep an eye on them.

If your child has a medical appointment, try to book it outside of school hours where possible. If not, send them in before and after the appointment so they don't miss a full day.

If you are thinking of keeping your child at home when they're unwell, it's important to tell us as soon as possible. [add details on how to report illness absence].

Requesting a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Our school community is stronger when all children are here, on time, every day. Coming to school helps your child learn, build confidence and life skills.

You can apply for a leave of absence for certain reasons such as if your child has a medical appointment or an interview, or if there are exceptional circumstances.

Department for Education guidance, "Working together to improve school attendance" says: "Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance." (p.85)

If you need to ask for time off for exceptional circumstances, please speak to us first. We will always listen and talk this through with you.

- *Discuss with us before you make any plans*
- *Fill in a leave of absence request form ([add details])*
- *Give at least four weeks' notice if you can [adapt as appropriate]*
- *The parent or carer your child lives with should make the request*

If there is a family emergency, please think carefully about whether your child needs to miss school. In most cases, it is better for them to stay in school, with their friends and routine. If you can, please make other arrangements so they can still attend.

We must know where children are so we can know that they are safe. If we do not know why your child is not in school, we will follow our safeguarding procedures.

If time off is taken but not authorised you may get a penalty notice fine or other legal action.

To help you plan ahead, you can find our term dates and INSET days here: [add link].

If you have any questions or need support, please contact [name/role] on [details]. We are here to help.

Being on time/lateness

Being on time helps your child start the day calmly. It helps them learn, build routines and connect with their friends.

When children arrive late, they can miss important information and feel unsettled.

Pupils can arrive from [X:XXam]. They should be ready to start the school day at [X:XXam].

[Add where children can go before school, e.g. playground or breakfast club.]

If your child arrives after [X:XXam], they will be marked as late.

[For secondary schools: if applicable, explain what else might happen if they are late, e.g. very briefly outline the process for late sanctions if a child is late with no explanation].

If getting to school on time is difficult, please talk to us. We can help with routines and find small changes that make mornings easier.

We may invite you to meet with us to talk about lateness and agree a plan together.

If you have any questions or need support, please contact [name/role] on [details].

Religious observance

As we approach [religious observance], we wish an early [greeting appropriate for the specific religious observance] to all families who will be celebrating.

If your family will be observing [religious observance] and your child will be absent from school on the day, please can you let us know in advance.

Additional days before or after [specific date(s), or the name of the observance] – for travel or extended celebrations – are not normally authorised under our religious absence policy.

Our expectation is that pupils will attend school on the days directly before and after [religious observance]. [Add sentence on relevant in-school activities on that day.]

We look forward to welcoming all pupils back on the next school day. If you need support with attendance, please contact [named contact].

Support with attendance

We want every child to feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Being in school every day helps children build routines, make friends and grow in confidence.

We know that some children feel worried about coming to school at times. This is normal, especially at the start of a new term, a new class, or if there are issues with friends or in lessons. Sometimes there are other issues that make coming to school difficult, such as transport, uniform or difficulties at home.

If attendance is becoming a struggle, please talk to us – we are here to help. We can work together to understand what is happening and agree a plan together. If needed, we can help you find support from other services. Contact [name/role] on [details] to talk it through.

[additional content on support with worries/anxiety to be used only where relevant. e.g. for phone / in-person / personalised written communication]

It's normal to feel nervous sometimes. In most cases, coming to school helps children feel better. Being with friends and trusted adults can make worries feel smaller. We will look out for your child, listen to them and help them feel safe.

We know some children may have stronger or longer-lasting feelings of anxiety. If this happens, we will work with you to support your child. This may include small, practical changes such as:

- *extra support from a trusted adult*
- *changes to routines or activities within the school day*
- *support at break or lunchtime*

Please remember, we are here to help. If you have any concerns, contact [name/role] on [details].