

My ref: 240227 FC\_Absence & Attendance Parent Letter  
Your ref:

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**Children, Education & Families**

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To all Parents/ Carers of pupils in  
Cambridgeshire Schools

Dear Parents/ Carers,

School absence has increased significantly since the pandemic, with persistent absence having **doubled** and overall absence increasing by 3%. Around 120,000 pupils missed 50% or more of school.

Being mindful of the context behind the increasing prevalence for medical reasons for absence in children and young people, the Local Authority and all schools are very keen for all pupils in Cambridgeshire to have the very best educational outcomes and school attendance is a key to ensure that happens. We firmly believe that for pupils to progress and achieve their full potential that they need to attend school, to ensure the very best possible start in life. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do not perform as well in exams.

Absence due to medical reason is an area of increased focus. There are government guidelines for schools and nurseries about managing infectious disease and how to ensure regular attendance at school. This explains when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason.

If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know. The guidance can be accessed through the following link:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Also, the QR code:



For non-infectious illness, the above guidance also provides clarity on school attendance expectations. It is equally important to make the school aware and work with the school to ensure minimal disruption to your child's education.

Children who arrive late at school after the attendance register is closed, are deemed as absent from school. Therefore, it is equally important for everyone not to be late for registration.

Any application for leave can only be granted by the head teacher in exceptional circumstances. If you believe that your circumstances are exceptional then you should discuss this with your school to seek their consent before making the decision to travel or allowing your child to be absent from school.

To address irregular school attendance, unauthorised term-time leave and late arrival at school, the Local Authority will utilise a variety of enforcement actions at our disposal, which include Penalty Notice fines and prosecution in the Magistrate's courts.

I realise that the vast majority of parents support their child's attendance at school as they recognise the significant impact this can have on their child's education and their life chances. We are also aware of the rise in children and young people experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties and as a consequence emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA). We would strongly encourage you to speak to your child's school if you are concerned that anxiety or a mental illness is affecting your child or young person's ability to attend school and access learning.

We hope you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time and ensuring your child attends regularly and is not late for school.

Yours sincerely



Fran Cox  
Assistant Director: Place Planning and Inclusion  
Cambridgeshire County Council

