

Attendance - A Parent’s Guide

## What is attendance?

## Attendance means that your child is taking part in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by your child’s school.

## Why is it important that your child attends school?

Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life.

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child develop academically, socially and emotionally.

Attending and taking part in learning is fundamental to making sure that our young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

St David’s Primary School provides many learning opportunities for children.

**When is it ok for my child not to be in school?**

Your child can be off school if:

* They are ill.
* They are attending a doctor or hospital appointment.
* 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.
* If they are involved in an activity and the school agrees in advance.
* 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.
* Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative.

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.

**What do I do if I know my child is going to be absent?**

You need to inform the school by phone as early as possible on the first day your child is off school. The school may ask you if you know when your child will be back at school.

If your child is off school because of a long-term illness or condition your education authority must make arrangements for your child so they can keep learning. This might include sending work home so your child doesn’t miss too much.

**What does the school do if my child is off school?**

We may contact you by phone to find out why your child is off school if you do not inform the school of an absence.

You need to keep your child’s school up to date with your contact details.

**Every minute counts…**

**Being punctual is important too…**

Being late for school reduces learning time.

If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year.

If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year.

**What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child?** Research has shown that children who are not in school are most vulnerable and are easily drawn into crime. Those children who play truant are more likely to offend than those that do not.

**What if I am having difficulty getting my child to attend school?**

Please contact the school office at your earliest opportunity. Mrs McPherson and your child’s class teacher will be happy to help in any way that we can. We have very positive links with many local services who are also able to help.