

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to you with this special Attendance newsletter to provide you with a clear outline about our school attendance and absence procedures and what Balshaw's will do in response to poor pupil attendance. We believe that regular school attendance is the key to allow all pupils to maximise their educational potential and to help them grow into emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to succeed in life and make a positive contribution to their community.

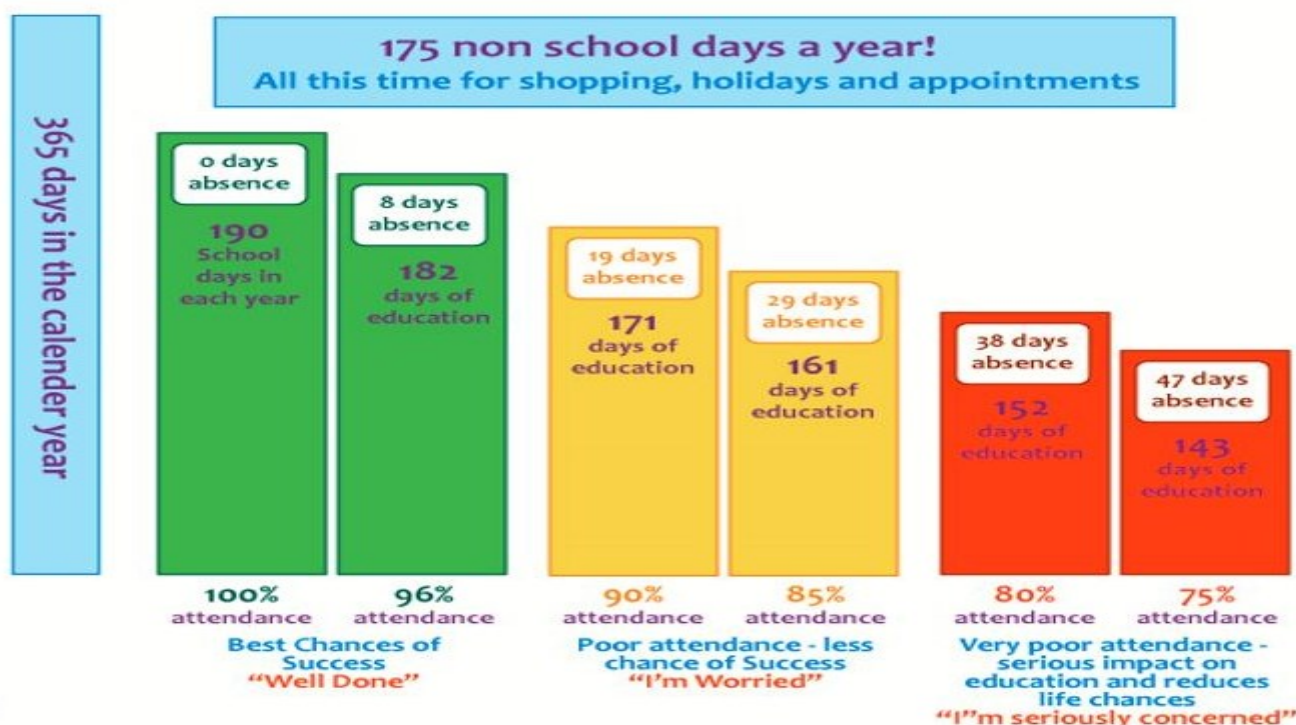


The Governing Body of Balshaw's are in full support of all measures school takes to improve and promote high levels of pupil attendance as well as taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence. Regular non-attendance at school will impact on your child's academic progress. Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

There is a direct link between poor attendance and poor achievement. Balshaw's High School has a minimum target of 97% attendance for every child. A student who has only **90% attendance** misses almost **4 weeks of school every year**. That's over 100 hours of learning lost. If pupils do not attend school regularly, they will experience difficulty in keeping up with their school work and in Upper School their GCSE studies. As well as this, absence means pupils also miss out on the many extra curricular and enrichment activities that we offer that support the curriculum and nurture children's growth into young adults. Research shows that pupils who do not attend school regularly are at a greater risk of becoming involved in crime or becoming a victim of abuse. Poor school attendance can also impact upon your child's academic, social and emotional development.

However, we appreciate there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This newsletter explains the approach we as a school are following to support excellent attendance. It's crucial that pupils are in attendance at school as often as possible to take full advantage of learning opportunities. The chart below highlights the impact of poor attendance and that below 96%-

## Good Attendance Means...



## How is attendance data gathered by Balshaw's?

Attendance is recorded by being present at morning registration at 8:40am and Period 5 lessons. If a student comes into school after 9:10am registration is closed and they will be recorded as absent for the whole morning session (which is classed as an absence). If a student comes into school after an appointment they will be classed as absent for the morning period but present for the afternoon (if they are present at Period 5).

## What is classed as Persistent Absence?

Persistent Absence is classed as any absence that equates to over 10% of the academic year at any given time. Persistent absence is classed as attendance which falls at 95% or below. The impact of Persistent Absence can be seen below.

Close of first half-term: 3.5 days in total

Close of 2nd half-term: 7 days in total

Close of 3rd half-term: 10 days in total

Close of 4th half-term: 12.5 days in total

Close of 5th half-term: 15.5 days in total

Close of 6th half-term: 19 days in total

*Surely 1 or 2 days absent a week doesn't seem much but this is how it is..*

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

**How we monitor attendance** -Attendance reports are generated weekly to look at percentage attendance and persistent absence as well as good attendance levels. Each half-term attendance data is reviewed in order to identify patterns of absence, broken weeks and instances where support and intervention is needed.

Pupil attendance is categorised in 3 ways

**Level 1- 96% or above—Good attendance—School expectation- well done!**

**Level 2—96-90% - Below average attendance. Parents/carers contacted if appropriate by Form Tutors**

**Level 3—90-85% - Persistently absent attendance—Head of Year intervention. Parents/carers contacted and if appropriate invited in to school.**

Any child whose attendance falls below 85% will be contacted by Mrs Leyland our School Attendance Officer

Balshaw's High School will always endeavour to respond to poor attendance without the need for referral to other agencies. Parents or Carers will be contacted as soon as the problem is identified and strategies put in place to encourage pupils to return to school as soon as possible.

## What can parents do to help?

- Talk at home about the importance of **excellent** attendance and its link to achievement and positive mental health and wellbeing
- Promote and encourage resilience and ensure pupils attend school as regularly as possible . Help your child to understand that you **do not condone absence for invalid reasons**
- Ensure your child is punctual in the morning and attends daily and understands you are working with the school to ensure that there are no barriers to learning caused by absence
- Use Synergy to keep up to date with your child's % attendance. Monitor it weekly and discuss it at home
- Book medical appointments outside of the school day
- Arrange holidays outside of term time (there are 175 days a year when Pupils aren't in school)
- Talk to us in school as soon as possible if there are factors impacting attendance so we can offer help and support
- Remind pupils that they should not use mobile phones in school and they should not ring directly home asking to be collected. If they feel unwell they should go to the Pastoral Hub where they will be seen by a member of the Pastoral Team or in an emergency a First Aider and the appropriate action will be taken
- Ensure all Emergency Contact Information is up to date so that we can make contact with you should we need to
- Only apply for a leave of absence for exceptional reasons. On the rare event this happens a request must be made in advance by parents/carers. The request should be made in writing and addressed to the Headteacher
- Work with us to help us understand any barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support
- Telephone or email school each day of an absence and help pupils complete work they miss— staff cannot set work for children who are absent
- We would kindly ask that you inform us of any medical or emotional issues that may be affecting your child's attendance to enable us to offer the appropriate support.
- If you suspect that your son or daughter is experiencing any problems or issues at school that may be affecting their attendance, please make contact with us as soon as possible either via email at **attendance@balshaws.org.uk** or contact the main school switchboard on **01772 421009**. This will alert us to any problems and help us to work with you towards resolving any issues.
- **Persistent late arrival of your child to school could result in the Local Authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice as regular lateness has an impact on attainment too—see below for the impact of persistent lateness**

<b>5 minutes late every day =</b> <b>3 school days lost in a year</b>	<b>10 minutes late every day =</b> <b>6.5 school days lost in a year</b>	<b>15 minutes late every day =</b> <b>10 school days lost in a year</b>	<b>20 minutes late every day =</b> <b>13 school days lost in a year</b>	<b>30 minutes late every day =</b> <b>19 school days lost in a year</b>
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## Is my child too ill for school? To send or not to send that is the question!

The Education Act 1996 requires that all parents ensure that their children receive an education. At Balshaw's we know that sometimes it can be difficult for parents/carers to know how long to keep their child off school for if they are genuinely unwell. Please take a moment to look at the attached document – link below and the government's guidance on when a child should not come in to school and some helpful information from the NHS below on when to keep your child off school.

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/03/a-parents-guide-to-keeping-kids-healthy-this-school-year/>

Pupils should still attend school if they have a cough or common cold but **not** if they have a fever. Tiredness and headaches are not a valid reason to miss out on a day of education. We are very aware that for some pupils there are extenuating circumstances for absence and it is important to ensure school is aware so we can support pupils.



UK Health  
Security  
Agency



# Should I keep my child off school?

## Yes

### Until...

Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

## No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek



SCAN ME

### Advice and guidance

To find out more, search for **health protection in schools** or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minftec>.

**Medical/Dental Appointments**—Ideally, we would advise that these can be arranged outside of school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that the child attends before and returns to school after the appointment. Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

**Holidays in term time**— It is not Balshaw’s High School policy to authorise holidays in term time. Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence may be reported as a matter of concern to Lancashire County Council’s Attendance Team; we are under a duty to do this.

### **Authorised or unauthorised absence**

If your child is ill, school will need details of their illness. If we are aware of the absence the school will record the absence as authorised for the first few days. If the illness continues you may be asked to provide medical evidence from your GP such as an appointment card, prescription label or copy of a prescription. However, school will not authorise non attendance if it becomes frequent. If your child’s attendance falls below 90% (persistent absence) you will be asked to provide medical evidence to authorise the absence.

Please note that It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold if they are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature. But if your child has a fever, they should stay home from school or nursery until they feel better, and the fever has resolved. If they have diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they should stay home for at least 48 hours after the last episode.

### **Support from school**

We fully understand there are pupils who will have genuine illnesses that causes them to have more than the occasional day off school. There is lots of help and support in place for children with medical conditions or those who are feeling overawed with school and possibly struggling to attend. See support available below-

Pastoral Hub

Pastoral Manager Health and Wellbeing

Form Tutors

Heads of House

Compass Bloom

Mental Health Support Team



Early Help Assessment

Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance

Referral to School Nurse

Team Around the Family meetings

Parental Contract

We hope that this newsletter will help you to have a clear understanding about the School’s attendance expectations. Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you feel your child needs any additional support in attending school as we will endeavour to work with you as parents to solve any issues in order for your child to achieve well, grow socially and emotionally and ultimately to be successful in all they do. Together we can help your child achieve.