

Parent Guide to School Attendance

Starting Secondary School: Every Day Counts

Starting secondary school is an exciting milestone for your child. Attending school every day from the very beginning of Year 7 will help your child settle into their new routines, build friendships, develop confidence and achieve their full potential.

At Knutsford Academy, excellent attendance is a priority because we know there is a strong link between regular attendance, learning and success.

This guide explains our attendance expectations and how you can support your child as they begin their secondary school journey.

Why Attendance Matters

Good attendance helps your child to:

- Make a positive start at secondary school.
- Build strong relationships with teachers and classmates.
- Establish good routines and independence.
- Keep up with learning and make progress.
- Develop confidence and enjoy school life.

Missing school regularly can quickly lead to gaps in learning that become difficult to catch up with.

Our school attendance target is **96% or above**.

Your Responsibilities as a Parent/Carer

As your child starts Year 7, you can support excellent attendance by:

- Ensuring your child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Contacting the school on the first day of absence by phone, providing a reason.
- Informing school each day your child is absent unless another arrangement has been agreed.
- Providing medical evidence if requested for repeated or ongoing illness.
- Booking medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Keeping your contact details up to date.
- Avoiding holidays during term time.

If your child feels worried, anxious or reluctant about attending school, please contact us as soon as possible. We want to work with you to provide support and help your child feel confident in their new environment.

When Should My Child Stay at Home?

Your child should attend school every day unless they are:

- Too unwell to attend school.
- Experiencing an urgent and unavoidable family emergency.
- Unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance approved by the school.

If you are unsure whether your child is well enough to attend, please refer to NHS guidance:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Types of Absence

☒ Authorised Absence

An absence approved by the school for a valid reason, including:

- Illness (medical evidence may be requested where appropriate).
- Medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours.
- Exceptional circumstances approved in advance.

☐ Unauthorised Absence

An absence that has not been approved by the school, including:

- Holidays taken during term time without permission.
- Keeping a child off school unnecessarily.
- No reason being provided for an absence.
- Arriving after the register has closed.

Reporting an Absence

If your child is absent from school:

- Contact the school before **8.30am** on the first day of absence.
- Continue to contact school each day your child remains absent.
- Provide your child's full name, tutor group (if known), reason for absence, and your relationship to them.

If we do not receive a reason for an absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

For safeguarding reasons, we may contact you or carry out a home visit if we are unable to confirm the reason for your child's absence.

Being On Time Matters

Arriving on time helps your child start the day positively and ensures they do not miss important learning.

- Lateness disrupts learning and can affect progress.
- Arriving after registers close is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed in the same way as attendance concerns.

Attendance Benchmarks

- **96% and above** – Good attendance
- **Below 90%** – Persistent absence and a cause for concern
- **50% or below** – Severe absence and serious concern

We will contact and support families where attendance falls below expectations.

Support for Families

We understand that some children may find the move to secondary school challenging. If attendance becomes difficult, please speak to us early so we can help.

Support may include:

- Meetings with your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year.
- Individual Raising Attendance Plans.
- Pastoral support.
- Support from external services, such as wellbeing or family support teams.

Holidays During Term Time

There is no automatic right to take holidays during term time.

- Leave of absence is only authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Requests must be submitted in advance.
- Unauthorised term-time holidays may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

The Law

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

If attendance remains a concern, the Local Authority may take action, including:

- Penalty Notices (fines).
- Court action in serious cases.

Working Together for a Successful Start to Year 7

The move to secondary school is an important step, and we want every child to feel happy, safe and successful at Knutsford Academy.

Excellent attendance happens when:

- Parents, pupils and school work together.
- Concerns are shared early.
- Support is provided quickly.

By establishing positive attendance habits from the first day of Year 7, we can give your child the best possible start to their secondary school journey.

Need Help?

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, wellbeing or transition to secondary school, please contact us.

We are here to support you and your child every step of the way.

Together, we can ensure every child attends regularly, feels supported and achieves their very best.