**Department for Education – Parent Fines for Missing School: What you need to know.**

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance at school perform better than those who don’t.

There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss school, such as illness or where the[school](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/category/schools/) has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance.

However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene. In some cases, this might mean that parents receive a fine.

**How much could I be fined if my child misses school?**

Parents who take their child out of school without permission may face paying a fine.

It is the responsibility of the local authority to issue fines to parents and the process can vary from council to council.

Fines for school absences start at £60, rising to £120 if you fail to pay within 21 days. Some councils charge this fine per child, while others fine each parent for each child.

If you’re prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn’t been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Councils must draw up a Code of Conduct and are expected to publish it on their website to explain their process for issuing fines. Check your local rules [here](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council).

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system. Any extra money is returned to the government.

**What if my child needs to miss school?**

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

* Your child is too ill to attend.
* You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.
* Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because it is a day set aside for religious observance.
* Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child’s transport to school and it’s not available or has not been provided yet.
* Your child does not have a permanent address and you are required to travel for work. This exception only applies if your child attends their usual school or another school where you are staying as often as possible. This must be 200 half days or more a year if they are aged 6 or older.

**What happens if my child misses school without a good reason?**

If your child is absent and you haven’t received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action.

Before that, your child’s school and your local council are expected to support you to improve their child’s attendance before any measures are put in place**.**

These measures can include:

* **Issue a fixed penalty notice, otherwise known as a ‘fine’**– your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child’s absence from school. Check your local council’s rules on when you can be fined.
* **Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court**– if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you’re not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
* **Prosecute you**– this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.

**Why is attendance important?**

Our research shows that pupils who perform better at the end of both primary and  [secondary school](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/category/secondary-schools/) missed fewer days than those who didn’t perform as well.

[Evidence](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/the-link-between-absence-and-attainment-at-ks2-and-ks4)  also shows that students with the [highest attendance](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/03/27/what-are-ghost-children-and-why-is-school-attendance-important/) throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results. This is why parents have a legal duty to make sure their child is in school, unless they are absent with permission from the school or receiving a suitable home education.

We’re working with schools and local councils to improve attendance, including by introducing a new data visualisation tool to make it easier to analyse attendance, spot issues and intervene more quickly.