

The headteacher will decide the amount of time a pupil can be away from school, taking into account their attendance record.

Requests **will not** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before or during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence for any reason
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already 10% or above, for any reason



### Lateness and truancy

Good attendance doesn't just involve being present in school – it also involves punctuality. You also have a responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time, and stays in school during the day.

Schools doors open at **8.50am** and all pupils are expected to be seated in their classrooms at **9:00am** every day, ready to learn. From September 2018 if pupils are not in their classrooms by **9:20am**, they receive a late mark – this is an **unauthorised absence**.

If the school believes a pupil is truanting, immediate action will be taken – this can escalate to penalty notices.

### How can I help?

You can help in many ways:

- Encourage good attendance by making sure your child goes to school regularly.
- Take an interest in your child's school work.

- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of absence from school.
- Support our school in our efforts to control inappropriate behaviour.
- Only keep your child away from school if really necessary and when they are too ill to attend.
- Inform us on the first day of your child's absence, and keep us updated throughout the absence period.
- Work with us to make sure your child overcomes any attendance or late problems prior to them being escalated.
- Discuss planned absences with the SBM and apply for permission at least 15 school days in advance.
- Only take your child out of school during term time where the absence has been **authorised**.

### Attendance matters!

**Don't underestimate the importance of 100 percent attendance. Even one day missed can have an effect on learning:**

- **98** percent attendance means **four** school days missed
- **95** percent attendance means **10** school days missed
- **90** percent attendance means **19** school days missed
- **80** percent attendance means **38** school days missed
- **Five minutes** late each day means **three** school days missed

**Please help us promote good attendance throughout our school – you really do play an important role.**

# Whitefield School

**School attendance  
parents need**

*Every day*  
**COUNTS**

### Why is good attendance

Good attendance and punctuality are essential for success at school, and are positive life habits that are essential for future success.

Through regular attendance:

- Build friendships and social skills in groups.
- Develop life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social activities.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.



**All parents support good attendance in partnership with their child's school to provide a positive approach.**

## What does the law say?

All children of compulsory school age, between 5-16 must receive a suitable full-time education and must attend 190 days per academic year. As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making appropriate alternative arrangements.

Once you have registered your child at a school, you are also legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child misses school without you knowing – legal action can be taken against you by the LA. It is a legal offence to fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.



**Legal action can involve a penalty notice or being taken to court.**

**Parents also face the risk of imprisonment and parenting orders. Parenting orders involve attending a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.**

A penalty notice of £60 may be issued as an alternative to prosecution, but this will rise to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice will usually lead to **prosecution**.



## Can my child ever be absent?

When a pupil is absent from school, this will be classified as either **'authorised'** or **'unauthorised'**.

The governing board and headteacher decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons, e.g.:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observances
- Family bereavement

Wherever possible, parents should always try to arrange medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours. If you are unable to do this we encourage you make appointments after 1.30pm so your child can get their afternoon attendance mark.



## What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable.

Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates
- Oversleeping
- Absences which have not been explained
- Arriving at school after the register has closed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation
- Day trips or family outings

## Holidays during term time

The school **cannot** be expected to authorise an absence for a holiday during term time.

Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school. Only in **exceptional circumstances** may a holiday be authorised during term time – this will be decided by the headteacher.

**Exceptional circumstances do not involve cheaper costs, family availability or weather conditions.**

You can be fined if you take your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher.



## Requesting absences

Please direct all requests for absence to the School Business Manager via the Request for Absence Form.

All absences, including for holidays, must be requested as far in advance as possible – the minimum notice period is 15 school days. If you think your child needs to be taken out of school, you should discuss the reasons with the SBM as soon as possible.

If the school is satisfied with the evidence and the notice period, they will authorise the absence.