

School Attendance – a very important message for all parents/carers

September 2023

Important - please read!

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Dear Parent/Carer,

This is an important update about school attendance for the 2023/24 academic year.

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is working in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance.

A big thank you to the majority of parents who make sure their children attend school regularly, particularly during the current cost of living crisis impacting families.

Your efforts, working in partnership with the school, will ensure that your child will have the best chance to achieve their academic potential and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. It will also enable your child to:

- access the lessons needed to achieve their expected grades
- maintain friendships and develop new ones
- have access to social and sporting events offered by the school
- explore potential careers
- develop work habits such as good punctuality which are essential to thrive in the world of employment

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

If you are worried about your child/children's attendance the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school has specialist staff who may be able to help, and all schools work closely with health and council teams who

may also be able to help if needed. If you have concerns about mental health; domestic abuse; parenting; bereavement; finance; problems with drugs and alcohol; you can find help and support from the 'From Birmingham with Love' webpage:

[From Birmingham with Love](#)

Additionally, Birmingham City Council provides online information and guidance to parents on school attendance which you can access here:

[School Attendance Information for Parents](#)

It may be tempting to book a family holiday in term time to save on costs during the cost of living crisis. Parents have also told us that the impact of industrial action in schools and the recent pandemic has made them even more likely to book holidays during the school term.

However, now is not the time for children to miss even more school. Family holidays in term time are not allowed in law and are very unlikely to be authorised. Taking children on leave without applying for authorisation may mean the school has to report your child as 'missing' to the local authority and holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively in law. Adding even more absence to the time children have missed because of school closures only means that the children miss even more lessons that will not be repeated.

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Notifying the school of leave due to a family emergency does not mean it will be authorised.

Please note that where parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly, legal action, including penalty notices, may be considered.

We wish you and your child/children all the best for the new academic year.

Kind regards

Education Legal Intervention Team
Birmingham City Council