

ATTENDANCE

An information leaflet for parents and carers

Earls Colne Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards of pupil attainment. Regular attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

September 2026



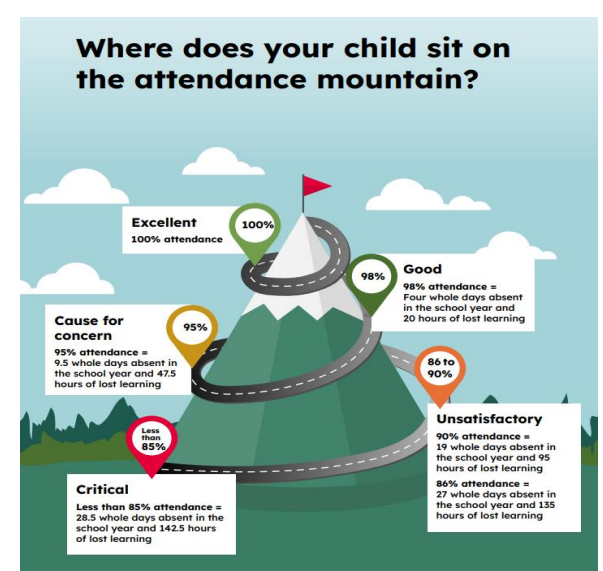
What should I do if my child is absent from school?

By law, schools must record absences and the reasons given. You are therefore required to contact the school immediately if your child is absent.

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before *9.00 am*
- The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before *9.00 am*

The school office should be informed in writing of absences known in advance, such as medical appointments.

If you wish to request a longer absence – which may or may not be authorised (see overleaf) – please use a Leave of Absence form available from the school office.



Earls Colne Primary School & Nursery

**Park Lane,
Earls Colne,
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**Essex
CO6 2RH**

Tel: 01787 222205

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**Our Senior Attendance Champion
with lead responsibility for
attendance is:
Mrs K.Sercombe**

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Lateness

Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at Earls Colne Primary School are:

Gates open: 8.40 am

Registration: 8.50 am – 9am

*A late mark **before** the registers have closed (L) will be given: After 9.00 am*

*A late mark **after** the registers have closed (U) will be given: After 9.20 am*

End of the school day: 3.15

Understanding different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, and is a legal requirement.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, as well as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the governors, following Government regulations, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings including penalty notices and fines.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to be registered (30 minutes after the register opens);
- shopping trips;
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays in term time, including any arranged by other family members or friends.

Please see the Attendance Policy for full details of which circumstances will **not** be authorised.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

The law specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 state that "the need or desire for a holiday" is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

It is important for parents/carers to be aware that while decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

The Department for Education's statutory national framework, that all schools in England must follow.

- There is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness.
- If a Penalty Notice is issued for an offence of unauthorised absence, the first will attract a fine of up to £160 per pupil, per parent (£80 if paid within 21 days);
- A second offence in three years will attract a fine of £160 per pupil, per parent.
- Schools cannot issue a third penalty notice in 3 years, and must consider other sanctions, which may include prosecution.

Please speak to the school if you need more information about these rules.