

Attendance and Absence Myth Busters

Myth	Fact
<p>Individual schools and trusts make their own attendance rules.</p>	<p>Our attendance policies and procedures are developed directly from the government guidance document “Working together to improve school attendance” (May 2022). In addition, the law clearly defines the responsibilities of parents/carers, schools and local authorities.</p>
<p>Authorised absences do not count against a pupil’s overall attendance figure.</p>	<p>Authorised absences are ultimately absences from school and as such have to be recorded and will count against a pupil’s overall attendance for that academic year. The difference between authorised and unauthorised absence is if the school authorises the pupil absence, then they have accepted the reason which has been given and they will not take any further action.</p>
<p>As long as a parent/carer notifies the school of an absence, the absence will always be authorised.</p>	<p>Legislation clearly states that it is the school who decides whether an absence is authorised or not. Providing notice of an absence does not in itself mean it meets the threshold for authorising said absence. School will consider each absence on a case by case basis and will always base the decision on government guidance.</p>
<p>Being late has no effect on a pupil’s attendance.</p>	<p>Schools are legally required to take attendance registers twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. If a pupil arrives at school or class after this register has closed, they will be marked with a “U” as per government guidance. A “U” code will show that the pupil was in school but will be classed as an absence and count against their overall attendance figure. Pupils arriving on time is incredibly important.</p>
<p>Headteachers can choose to permit term time holidays or leave of absence for any reason if they so choose.</p>	<p>The law which governs school attendance introduced in September 2013 states Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances; <i>“An application for leave of absence should (and from certain schools must) not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are <u>exceptional circumstances</u> based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can</i></p>

	<p><i>be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion."</i></p> <p>Where absence is not granted in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents are subject to a penalty notice and/or other legal interventions.</p>
<p>Individual schools and trusts decide on an ad-hoc basis when to issue penalty notices for non-attendance.</p>	<p>Legal intervention is the responsibility of the local authority in which the school resides. Schools are legally required to share attendance data and in consultation with schools, the LA will decide if legal action is required.</p>
<p>The money from penalty notices goes to the school.</p>	<p>Any monies generated from penalty notices are used by the local authority to cover the legal and administrative costs of the process. Any monies remaining is reinvested in local education services, it does not go to the school.</p>