



# Attendance & Punctuality

A guide for parents & carers



[www.smestowacademy.co.uk](http://www.smestowacademy.co.uk)



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## What can I do to improve my child's attendance?

Here are some of the things that you can encourage your child to do to ensure that they achieve and maintain good attendance and punctuality:

- Have an evening and morning routine that allows a minimum of 8 hours sleep.
- Limit digital technology use - e.g. gaming, social media, apps etc. and finish at least one hour before bed.
- Allow enough time in the morning for your child to get ready, have breakfast and travel to school and arrive on time.
- Have their own alarm clock.
- Get a reliable friend to call for them in the morning.
- Get their equipment and bag ready the night before.
- Have a regular study time each evening.
- Not waiting for friends in the morning before school.
- Learn bus timetables in advance.

**It will also help if parents/carers:**

Take an interest  
in schoolwork.

Work with and  
support the  
school.

Praise their  
child's efforts.

Check and sign  
their child's  
school planner  
regularly.

## Why is good attendance important?

- To avoid gaps in learning.
- To help achieve good exam results.
- To help with getting to sixth form, college, an apprenticeship or university.
- To help get a good job.
- To prevent court action

## What is a 'Persistently Absent (PA) Pupil'?

You should not keep your child from school or allow them to be absent without a valid reason:

- Your child becomes a 'persistently absent' pupil when attendance falls below 90%.
- A PA pupil will be monitored by the Safeguarding and Pastoral team
- If your child's attendance is under 90%, we will not authorise any absence without medical evidence (e.g. prescriptions, stamped appointment cards).
- As a school we monitor attendance very closely. If your child's attendance drops below 95% they will be monitored.
- Should your child's attendance drop below 50% they are deemed to be a "severely absent pupil"
- We work closely with the Education Welfare Officer at Wolverhampton City Council to monitor poor attendance and offer support

## What absences are not appropriate?

- To look after the house or other members of the family.
- To go shopping or to visit relatives.
- Because they are menstruating.
- Because they got up late.
- Because they don't want to come to school.
- For family birthdays or to go on family outings.

## What about holiday?

The Department of Education has introduced amendments to holidays taken in term time. The Headteacher will not be able to grant any leave of absence during term time, for any purpose unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you decide to take a holiday in term time and it has not been authorised by the school you will receive a fixed penalty. Schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions – equivalent to 5 days – for unauthorised leave of absence, for instance taking holiday in term time. The penalty notice for unauthorised absences is now at the new, higher, rate of £160 per parent per child, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.



For a second unauthorised absence within 3 years, the penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child, with no reduction for early payment. A third offence may lead to prosecution and fines of up to £2,500.

## What if absence is essential?

It is important to get a message to school - it is the responsibility of parents/carers to let the school know the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible, before 8:40am on the first day of absence.

Your child deserves a rigorous education and all the opportunities that Smestow Academy has to offer. Coming to school every day is essential for your child's academic and personal development.

## What are parental/carers responsibilities?

If your child is aged between 5 and 16, you must make sure he/she attends school regularly and stays in school. This is law. You can be taken to court for breaking this law (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Parents should ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn. This means pupils should wear school uniform. They must have their books, pens, pencils, PE kit etc, and not be too tired, worried or hungry. Parents must also make sure that pupil's complete homework on time and keep to school rules about behaviour.

## What is an authorised absence?

Parents and carers can explain absences but they cannot authorise them. Only the school can decide whether explanations about absences are acceptable and can be authorised. For persistent absence, the school will insist a doctor's note or medical evidence is provided. All other absences will be coded as 'O' and will not be authorised.

## What about absence for dental/medical treatment?

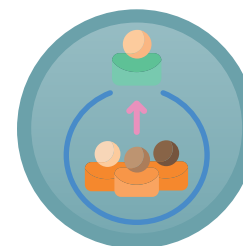
Your child may have to be absent from school for medical or dental treatment. The school must be informed if during school time, but where possible appointments should be arranged before/after school. Please ensure evidence is provided for a medical absence to be authorised.

## What happens if a pupil misses too much school?

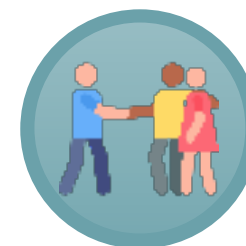
If a pupil does not attend everyday, this is what can happen:



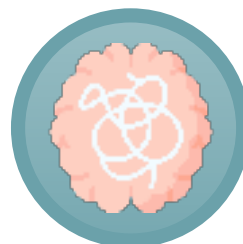
They will not know how to complete the work set.



They may feel left out and get left behind.



Friendship groups may change.



They become anxious.



They lose touch.



They will underachieve.

## What rewards are there for excellent attendance and exemplary punctuality?

Regular attendance and punctuality rewards are given throughout the year.



## Remember

- 7 sessions (3 and a half days) missed in each half term = a persistently absent (PA) pupil.
- Missed lessons = Missed opportunities.
- Being on time shows that pupils are reliable and organised, and know that school matters.
- Employers want good time keepers.

## What happens if pupils are late?

- Your child will be at a disadvantage.
- They may miss important notices given in Form time and interrupt lessons.
- Morning registration takes place at 8:30am.
- Any pupils arriving onto school site after 8:35am will enter via Late Gate, be marked as 'L' and receive a 30-minute lunchtime detention.
- If your child arrives after 9:05am, it is an unauthorised absence and will be coded as 'U' (arrived after registration closed). They will also receive a late detention.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 2:00pm.
- If your child's punctuality does not improve, further sanctions will be put in place.

## Our expectations

- Pupils should be waiting outside their form rooms by 8:30am every morning.
- We expect pupils to arrive on time for ALL lessons.

## Attendance at external examinations

- All pupils must attend external exams on time as these dates are set by the examinations boards and cannot be changed. If your child fails to attend an external exam parents/carers will be charged the cost of the examination.

## Safe and Well Visits

A member of the safeguarding and/or pastoral team at Smestow Academy may complete a "safe and well visit" where they will visit the family home if the pupil has not been in school and we have been unable to confirm the reason for absence.

Safe and well visits may also be conducted by the Education Welfare Officer from Wolverhampton City Council.

This is a procedure that the school has to follow by law to ensure that all its pupils are safe.

Attendance for <b>ONE</b> term	In <b>ONE</b> term your child will have missed	In a <b>YEAR</b> your child will have missed
<b>90%</b>	1 week 2 days	4 weeks
<b>80%</b>	2 weeks 4 days	8 weeks
<b>70%</b>	4 weeks 1 day	12 weeks
<b>60%</b>	5 weeks 3 days	16 weeks
<b>50%</b>	7 weeks	20 weeks
<b>40%</b>	8 weeks 2 days	24 weeks
<b>30%</b>	9 weeks 1 day	28 weeks



### **What if I need further information?**


**(Term Dates can be found on our website)**

Smestow Academy - 01902 539500

Childline (24 hour helpline) - 800 11 11

Parentline - 0808 800 2222

West Midlands Travel - 0121 254 7272.



**Together** we can  
help your child to  
feel happy and  
successful at school



Smestow Academy