

Misconceptions / Questions regarding Attendance.

1. **School wants you to send your child into school even when they are ill.**

FALSE: If your child is poorly then the best place for them is obviously at home. We appreciate it is sometimes a difficult decision whether to send them to school when they say they are unwell. Please remember that we can support you by delivering medication (with correct paperwork completed) during the school day and we will always phone you if your child is taken ill at school. If your child has had a stomach bug then a full 48 hours following their last bout of illness, should be left before they return to school so that they are less likely to be contagious to other children. Attendance of 95% over the school year can still be achieved with 9 days absence for sickness or medical appointments.

2. **If my child is absent for more than one day I need to let the school know each day.**

TRUE: In order to authorise absence from school, we need to be informed by a parent or carer each day and the reason for the absence given. Unfortunately, we are unable to authorise absence if we don't hear from you.

3. **I can bring my child into school later in the day even if I have phoned them in sick earlier.**

TRUE: Sometimes an ill child can pick up by lunchtime and start to feel better. It is absolutely fine to bring them into school later that day as long as they have not suffered from a stomach bug.

4. **School attendance in Reception doesn't matter because the children aren't five.**

FALSE: It is important for all children to establish patterns of good attendance (95%+) from the beginning of school. The better their attendance the more likely they are to secure good progress, be happy in school and form good relationships with children and adults.

5. **I've had a letter telling me that my holiday hasn't been authorised but I won't get fined because it's only two days.**

FALSE: If you have received a letter from the Governors/Headteacher telling you that your application has not been authorised, you WILL receive a penalty

notice from the LA if your level of absence is a cause for concern. Schools are unable to authorise holidays in term-time.

6. It is better to be honest and tell school if you're taking them out as you may be fined anyway.

TRUE: An absence will be recorded as unauthorised at any time that we do not have a concrete reason why your child is not in school. If your child is telephoned in sick over a number of days but then returns to school and tells us that they have been on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised and the absence will be referred. Please consider what kind of role model you want to be to your child. Asking them to avoid telling the truth puts a lot of pressure on a child and does not teach them the correct way to behave. Equally, Education Welfare has informed me, that if we are concerned about the amount of sickness reports we are receiving for a child leading to more absence, then we are entitled to ask parents for evidence of illness - e.g. evidence of a prescription medicine, an appointment card for a medical appointment.

7. School will tell social care if your child's attendance is poor.

TRUE and **FALSE:** We will ALWAYS work together with you to try and help you get your child to school if you are having difficulties. We will ALWAYS let you know if your child's attendance is dropping near or below 90% (persistent absenteeism) and it is possible to get out of this category by the end of the school year if we make improvements soon enough. Persistent absenteeism is 19 or more full day's absence over a school year - almost 4 weeks of absence. Please note each full day is two attendance marks for the morning and afternoon. If, in spite of extra support, your child's attendance does not improve then we have a statutory duty to involve the education welfare officer. This is a last resort BUT you have a legal obligation to have your child in school.

8. The fining system for term-time holidays is a money making scheme for the school.

FALSE: The only reason that the Board of Governors refers unauthorised term time holiday absence to the local authority is to try to deter term time absence and maximise school attendance and learning time for your children. Fines are retained by the local authority and NOT the school.