



Improving Lives Together
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Attendance Guidance for Schools and ELC Settings Easy Read Guide

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance at school is essential for children to reach their full potential, both academically and socially.

High attendance means children are more likely to succeed in school and have better future opportunities.

Perth and Kinross Council's goal is for every child to aim for 100% attendance. However, the minimum expectations are:

- 96% attendance for primary school students
- 92% attendance for secondary school students

If a child frequently misses school, they may face challenges such as:

- Gaps in learning and understanding
- Difficulty catching up with peers
- Higher risk of poor emotional health or mental health issues
- Fewer future job or education opportunities

Who Should Follow This Guide?

This guide applies to:

- Parents and families of children attending Perth and Kinross schools.
- School staff responsible for managing and promoting attendance.
- Agencies and services that work with children, young people, and families to ensure they stay engaged in education.

Legal Responsibilities

Parents' Duties

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly, according to the Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

Parents can choose to provide home education, but they must still inform the local council and follow certain rules.

Schools' Duties

Schools must record student attendance and follow up on unexplained absences.

If a child fails to attend school without a valid reason, parents may be required to explain the absence in front of an Attendance Sub-Committee or face legal consequences.

What Counts as Attendance?

Children are considered in attendance if they are:

- In school or participating in activities arranged by the school (like field trips, sports events, or cultural activities).
- Learning outside the school through programs approved by the school, such as:
 - College courses
 - Work experience
 - Tutoring provided by hospital or outreach services for children unable to attend school due to health reasons.

Types of Absence

1. Authorised Absence

This type of absence is approved by the school. It usually happens when:

- Illness or mental health issues prevent the child from attending school.
- Medical or dental appointments are scheduled during school hours.
- The child is attending a Children's Hearing, court appearances, or a Looked After Child Review.
- The family is observing religious holidays or bereavement.
- There are severe domestic circumstances that require the child to stay home for a short time (e.g., family crisis, moving houses, etc.).

2. Unauthorised Absence

This occurs when the school does not accept the reason for the child's absence, such as:

- Family holidays that have not been approved by the school.

- Truancy, whether the parent knows about it or not.
- Absences where no explanation is given, or the reason is not valid.
- Parent-condoned absence, where the school believes there is no good reason for the child to stay home.

3. Special Cases

Extended leave may be authorised for exceptional situations, such as:

- Cultural reasons.
- Children from Gypsy/Traveller families may have authorised absences due to travel.
- Armed Forces families may be authorised for leave when parents cannot take holidays during school breaks.

How to Report Your Child's Absence

Notify the school as soon as possible if your child is absent. You can report absences by:

- Phone call
- Email
- Text message or other agreed methods of communication

Explain the reason for the absence, and if possible, inform the school in advance of planned absences (e.g., for appointments).

If the school does not hear from you:

- They will try to contact you via phone or text by 9:45 a.m. (for primary schools) or 10:00 a.m. (for secondary schools).
- If they cannot reach you, they may contact other emergency numbers.
- In some cases, the school may conduct a welfare check or involve external services like social workers or the police to ensure the child's safety.

How Schools Track and Manage Attendance

Attendance is recorded twice a day for primary and nursery students (morning and after lunch), and period by period for secondary school students.

Attendance data is monitored regularly, and patterns of non-attendance are flagged early to help prevent long-term problems. The school will send formal letters to parents if there are concerns.

Stages of Support for Non-Attendance

Stage 1: Universal Support (Above 85% Attendance)

If attendance falls below 96% in primary or 92% in secondary, the school will:

- Send a letter to parents informing them of the low attendance.
- Arrange a meeting to discuss how to improve attendance if needed.

Stage 2: Additional Support (Below 85% Attendance)

The school will:

- Arrange a more detailed assessment to identify any issues affecting attendance.
- Hold a Child/Young Person's Plan (CYPP) meeting to set outcomes for improvement.
- Work with other services if needed, such as school counsellors or an outside agency.

Stage 3: Enhanced Support (Below 70% Attendance)

A multi-agency approach may be used, with support from outside organisations, including:

- Educational psychologists
- Health services
- Regular reviews of the Child/Young Person's Plan are held to track progress.

Stage 4: Intensive Support (Below 50% Attendance)

If attendance drops below 50%, more intensive measures are taken, such as:

- Weekly wellbeing checks to ensure the child's safety.
- Communication Between Parents and Schools
- Consideration of a referral to the Children's Reporter or Attendance Sub-Committee.

Good communication between parents and schools is key to helping children attend regularly.

Parents should:

- Keep the school updated with current contact details.
- Respond promptly to messages or calls from the school.
- Discuss any concerns about their child's attendance with the school to find solutions together.

Help Available for Families

Schools want to work together with parents to help solve attendance issues.

If your child is anxious or finding school difficult, schools may offer:

- Pastoral support from guidance teachers.
- Referral to specialist services (e.g., mental health support, educational psychologists).
- A range of targeted supports
- Flexible learning options (with proper planning and support).

You can always reach out to the school if you are facing challenges, and they will work with you to find the best way to help your child.

What Happens if Attendance Does Not Improve?

If there is no improvement after multiple attempts to support attendance, the school may:

- Refer the case to the Attendance Sub-Committee or Children's Reporter.
- This could lead to further action, including legal consequences if absences continue without a reasonable excuse.

By working together, parents, schools, and support services, we can ensure that every child has the right supports in place.

Please see attached link for further information found within the Attendance Guidance for Schools and ELCs.

[attendance-recording-guidance-and-operational-procedures](#)