

What should I do if my child is anxious or worried about going to school?

Your child has a right to an education and to feel safe and happy at school.

Unfortunately, some young people can be anxious or worried about going to school for a range of reasons. You may feel letting your child stay off school is an effective option, but unfortunately, this will not help find a solution. It is really important that you speak to school as early as possible if this kind of problem arises so that a solution can be worked out which ensures the best outcome for your child.– the earlier the better.

Your first point of contact should be the school. However there are also a number of services and agencies that can provide you with professional help and advice (contact details on the next page).

What if your child does not attend school regularly?

Your child's school will make every effort to maintain good communication and work with you to support your child. If school staff remain concerned about the reasons given (or not) for a pupil's absence, or there has not been an improvement in attendance, the Head Teacher or representative will arrange a meeting to discuss attendance. This may involve other appropriate agencies. The meeting will be a way to work collaboratively with school and parents/carers to plan the best way forward to support a return to school. If attendance issues are not resolved, a referral may be made to the Children's Reporter. The Reporter would consider the grounds and decide if a Children's Hearing was required.

SUPPORT INFORMATION AND ADVICE LOCAL

- ◆ **Your local GP**
- ◆ **Early Help Team**
01595 745242 anchor@shetland.gov.uk
- ◆ **Duty Social Work**
01595 744420
- ◆ **Education Outreach Service**
01595 745588 homelink@shetland.gov.uk
- ◆ **School Nursing Service**
01595 743076 shet.schoolhealth@nhs.scot
- ◆ **Shetland Advocacy**
01595 743929 advocacy@shetland.gov.uk

NATIONAL

- ◆ **ParentLine Scotland**
0808 800 2222
www.children1st.org.uk/parentline-scotland
- ◆ **Parentzone**
www.educationscotland.gov.uk
- ◆ **Childline**
08001111
www.childline.org.uk
- ◆ **Citizen Advice Bureau**
www.adviceguide.org
- ◆ **Enquire**
0845 123 2303
info@enquire.org.uk www.enquire.org.uk

References:

Included Engaged and Involved (2019) Part one: A Positive approach to the promotion and management of attendance in Scottish Schools.
SIC Encouraging Good Attendance www.shetland.gov.uk
Engaging Parents and Families: A Toolkit for Practitioners (2018) Education Scotland

Shetland Islands Council



School Attendance Matters



A Guide for Parents and Carers

Working in partnership with you

Parents and carers have by far the most important influence in children's lives and learning. Shetland Islands Council is committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure the best possible outcomes for their children, to ensure they are included, engaged and involved.

What does the law say about school attendance?

Education is not an option – it is compulsory. All children and young people enrolled at local authority schools should attend regularly and should not be absent without a reasonable reason. Education (Scotland) Act 1980 section 35.

Schools are expected to monitor attendance and take action which should include contacting the family of any child or young person not attending regularly, to help resolve any problems.

Why is school attendance so important?

From the beginning of your child's school journey, excellent attendance is important.

It allows children and young people to learn, make friends, experience new things and develop new skills. Regular attendance at school helps learners to understand responsibility, learn about the world they live in, build confidence, gain qualifications and to grow as individuals.

Every School Day Counts Attendance percentages can be misleading

100% attendance	0 Days missed	Gives your child the best chance of success
95% attendance	9 Days of Absence (1 week and 4 Days of Learning Missed)	
90% attendance	19 Days of Absence (3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed)	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress
85% attendance	27 days of absence (5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed. Almost half a term missed)	Serious implications for learning and progress
80% attendance	36 days of absence (7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed. Three quarters of a term missed)	
75% attendance	45 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed. (More or less a whole term missed)	

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, underachieve in classwork and exams and experience a negative impact on their health and wellbeing.

The Scottish Government publishes data on national attendance every two years. Average national attendance for 2020-21 was 92%.

What do I do if my child is going to be off school?

Parents/carers must follow the school's procedures for reporting an absence. It is important that you contact the school when your child is ill.

The NHS provide up to date and useful guidance on when your child is too ill for school.

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

As schools have a legal obligation to know where pupils are at all times they cannot just 'assume' they are still poorly when they are not at school.

Parents/carers need to keep in regular contact. There may be exceptions, e.g. prolonged periods of ill health but parents/carers should speak with their child's school on these occasions so plans can be made to support children and young people

Make every day count: what you can do to help

Talk to your child about the importance of going to school every day, make that your expectation

Be involved with your child's education and school-ask questions

Help your child maintain daily routines

Try to arrange non-urgent dental and medical appointments outside school hours

Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly ill. Frequent complaints of headaches and stomach aches may be a sign of anxiety

Avoid taking family holidays during the school term

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.