

What you can do

Make school attendance a priority at home

- Talk about the importance of going to school everyday, make that your expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to make dental and medical appointments during the school day. Try to avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

Absences can add up before you know it

90% attendance = $\frac{1}{2}$ day missed every week!

1 school year at 90% attendance = **four weeks** of lessons missed.

90% attendance over **five years** of secondary school = $\frac{1}{2}$ school year missed.

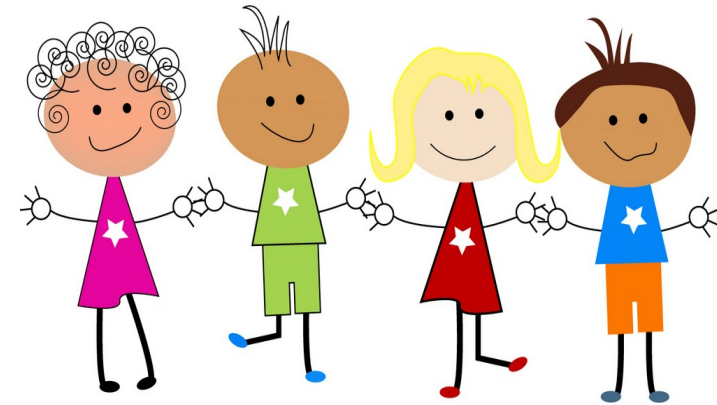
Communicate with the school

- Talk to teachers if you know your child is worried about something.
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behaviour. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from the school if you are having difficulty getting your child to school.

School Attendance

Every day of school helps your child enjoy and achieve.

Help us to ensure your child is a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor and a responsible citizen.



Information for parents/carers

Children's Services
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getting
it right
for every child
in Shetland



Why is school attendance important for your child?

- Most parents want their child to be happy and achieve.
- It is more important than ever for children to have a good education, to have choices and opportunities in adult life.
- Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected if they are not attending school regularly.
- Research shows that some young people who regularly miss school can be drawn into anti-social behaviour or crime.
- Chances (probability) of achieving good grades based on your child's school attendance level:

Attendance	Chance of achieving national qualifications
93.5%	Very good
92.5%	Good
91.5%	Fairly good
90%	Less than 50%
88%	Less than 35%
87%	Less than 20%

What are your responsibilities?

As a parent **you are responsible** for getting your child to school and making sure your child develops the habit of regular attendance.

Attendance matters for doing well in school and in life. It starts with good habits in pre-school and nursery. Studies show too many days off in nursery and P1 can cause children to miss out on the essential building blocks for literacy and numeracy, and this can cause them to struggle later in their school years. It doesn't matter if these absences are excused or unexcused. They all represent lost time in the classroom and a lost opportunity to learn.

Absences can affect the whole class room if the teacher has to slow down teaching and learning to help children who are always absent to catch up.



What can you do to encourage good attendance?

- For younger children, you can set a regular bedtime and morning routine. Make sure that they get 9 to 11 hours sleep.
- You can lay out clothes and pack school bags the night before.
- For older children, you can help set homework and bedtime routines that allow for 8½ and 9½ hours sleep.
- Make sure that when the lights go off, so do the phones, TVs, video games and computers.
- Get to know the teachers and school staff, and who you need to contact if there is a problem.
- Above all, set an example for your child. Show them that attendance matters to you and that you won't allow an absence unless they are truly sick.

Attendance at school has a huge impact on a pupil's success, starting in nursery and continuing right through to high school. As children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure pupils get to school safely every day, and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and beyond.

What if your child does not attend school regularly?

Where there is initial concern at school level regarding unexplained/ill-explained absences, schools will contact the parents/carers and request an explanation. 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. If attendance issues continue, the case may be referred to the children's reporter.