

We love seeing children arrive happily each morning and build strong friendships, routines, and their confidence through regular attendance

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION



NEW STARTERS 2026!

Attendance at Athelstan

At Athelstan, we view good attendance as an essential part of every pupil achieving well, feeling confident, and enjoying learning. Missing time in school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and affects their well-being. Plus, pupils with strong attendance make better progress and build secure relationships. When you register your child at school, you take on the legal duty to ensure their regular attendance and punctuality.

At Athelstan, our approach is based on early help, strong relationships, and understanding the barriers that affect attendance. We focus on building a welcoming environment where good attendance is celebrated and where we work alongside families to identify barriers and offer early support.

Regular attendance is also a key part of our safeguarding procedure. Persistent and severe absence can increase risks, reduce access to support, and limit opportunities for concerns to be identified early. For this reason, attendance is monitored closely and, where attendance concerns emerge, the school will take timely action to understand barriers and provide appropriate support.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with our office team or your child's teacher. Alternatively, Emma Fox is our Family Support Worker.

Useful Links

Go to for attendance FAQs:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/back-to-school-week-everything-you-need-to-know-about-school-attendance/>

Explaining absence:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Contact Info

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Email:
enquiries@athelstan.sheffield.sch.uk



Reporting Absence

If your child is unable to attend school, you must follow the procedure below:

1. On the first day of your child's absence, you should contact the school office before 8.30am with a reason for your child's absence and an expected return date. You can either leave a message on the absence line (selecting option 2) or speak to a member of the office team. You can contact us on 0114 269 2301.

2. You must contact the school on every day that your child is absent, unless otherwise agreed with the school.

3. Failure to contact school about your child's absence will result in your child receiving an unauthorised absence mark. The school will also take action in line with safeguarding procedures. This may include:

- Making first-day contact with parents or carers.
- Making further contact attempts where required, including contacting emergency contacts if no response is received.
- Carrying out home visits where appropriate and informing and liaising with all relevant professional services, including social workers and other linked practitioners.

Types of Absence

This is a summary of the main reasons your child might be absent and whether such absence may be authorised:

Authorised Absence:

- Illness - we use the NHS guidance *Is my child too ill for school?* to help guide families in making decisions around common illness. Children with minor illnesses, such as a cold without a temperature, are often well enough to attend.
- Medical appointments that can't be arranged outside of school hours.
- Recognised religious observance that is set apart by your religious body/calendar.
- Unavoidable emergency beyond your control.



Unauthorised Absence:

- No reason provided to school.
- Arriving after registers close at 9:30am.
- Holiday during term time, including day trips or family events.



Attendance Support Systems

Working together - first steps:

Our Attendance Policy prioritises working alongside our students and their families to build regular attendance and make sure that children feel settled and confident, especially when their journey in school is just beginning.

We regularly review attendance and punctuality and we communicate with parents and carers where there are any early concerns. Attendance Information Letters are sent to all households where attendance or punctuality falls below expected levels. We know that every family's circumstances are different - these letters are not a warning or sanction but rather a way of keeping you informed, even where communication is already happening or support is already in place. Our aim is to raise awareness early, recognise challenges, and work together to offer support so that concerns do not escalate and children can attend school regularly and on time.

Furthermore, as part of our policy, you may receive a phone call from a member of staff if we notice any changes in your child's attendance. These conversations are not about blame - they are about understanding.

Working together - possible support:

School can offer a range of support and will always work alongside you to ensure that help is early, efficient, and tailored to your child's needs. Support can include:

- Meetings with parents and pupils, including opportunities to capture the child's voice and understand barriers and triggers.
- Support plans or contracts.
- Early Help Assessment.
- Pastoral and emotional support.
- Routine adaptations.
- Referrals to agencies.



We know that there can be a range of reasons why children find it harder to attend school. Our priority is to listen, understand any barriers, and work with you to find the right support so that your child can attend regularly and feel successful in school. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please speak to us as early as possible. The sooner we work together, the more we can help.

Illness and Attendance

Trying to decide when your child is well enough to come to school can feel difficult. The NHS has a detailed website about many common illnesses and what they mean for your child's attendance: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Often children do not need to miss school if they have a minor illness, such as a cough or cold without a temperature. We will let you know if your child becomes too ill to remain at school.

School is also able to administer prescribed medicine with parental consent. Please just bring the medicine into the office, where you will need to sign a consent form, and we can answer any questions you might have.

Attendance Checklist

- Telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence to provide a reason and expected return date.
- Medical appointments should be outside school hours where possible. Where medical appointments take place during the school day, parents are expected to inform the school in advance and provide evidence such as an appointment card or letter within five school days.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.
- Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport - call on a family member, neighbour, or friend.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!



Family Intervention Service (FIS)

Any family can experience challenging times. FIS works alongside you and your family to offer help, support, and empower your family to make positive changes. They can offer support in overcoming barriers families may be experiencing in building good attendance, such as help with routines, sleep, behaviour, or anxiety.

Please read the attached leaflet for more information on the services that FIS offer, and how to get in touch.



Holidays and Leave of Absence

Leave of absence is only authorised during term-time if there are exceptional circumstances - rare, significant, and unavoidable. Parents do not have an automatic right to take children out of school during term time.

The following examples do not count as exceptional circumstances:

- Holidays that are cheaper in term time.
- Visiting family/attending family events.
- Parental work rotas or limited annual leave.
- Birthdays or celebrations.
- Childcare difficulties/travel convenience.



Exceptional circumstances are events which are sudden, unavoidable, and beyond the family's control. The school aims to work with parents and considers each request individually.

If you do want to take your child out of school during term time, you will need to complete a '**Request for Exceptional Term Time Leave**' form which can be collected from the school office. This needs to be completed regardless of the length of - and reason for - the absence.

Please note - once your child reaches statutory school age, a Penalty Notice may be considered when a pupil has ten sessions, or five school days, of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. These sessions do not need to be consecutive. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority, not the school, and are issued per parent, per child. Therefore, more than one notice may be issued if more than one parent or child is involved. A Penalty Notice for the first offence is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

Punctuality

Being on time every day helps pupils feel settled, reduces anxiety, and supports learning. Pupils are expected to arrive in school ready for the start of the school day at 8.50am. Doors open at 8.35am and close at 8.50am. Frequent or persistent lateness will be discussed with families to understand barriers and agree actions to support improved punctuality.

If your child is going to be late, please call the school office on 0114 269 2301 to advise them. You can also then order a school meal for your child, if required.

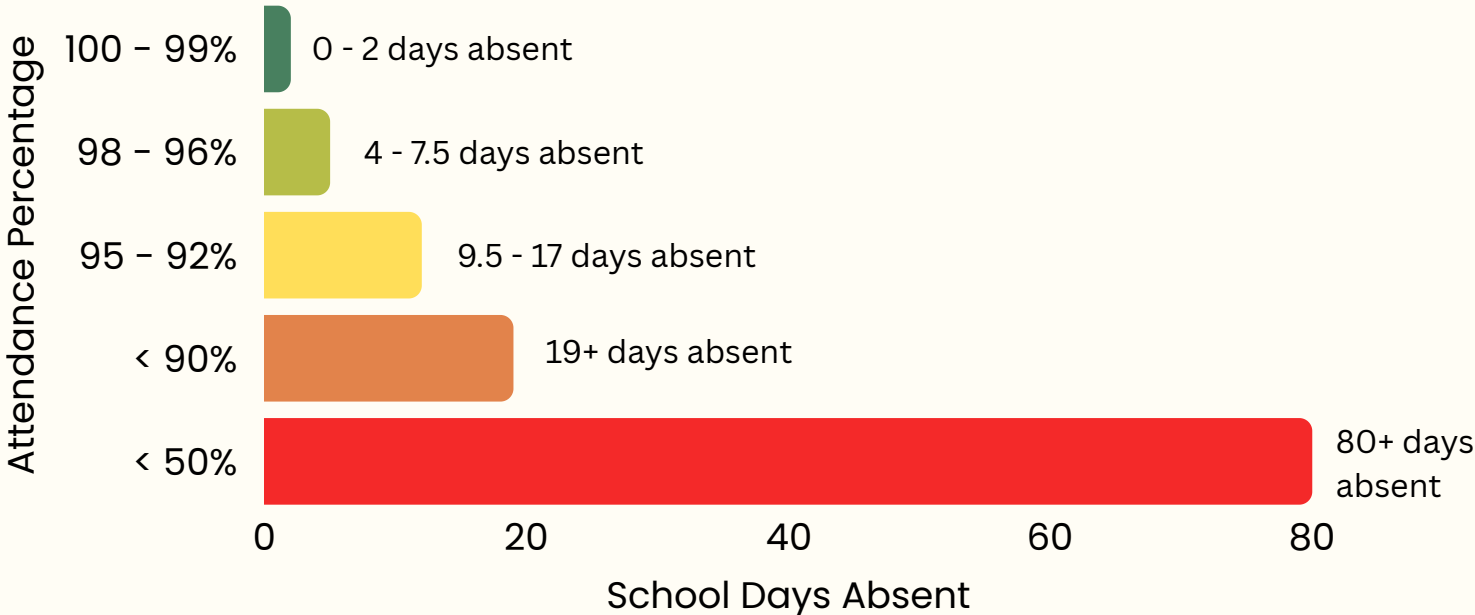
Attendance Goals

Pupils should attend school every day they are well enough to do so. Good attendance is supported by consistent daily routines. Families can help by preparing school clothing and bags the night before, encouraging an appropriate bedtime, and ensuring children wake in time to arrive at school promptly. Establishing these routines helps children feel calm, confident and ready to learn.

Attendance expectations:

- 96 percent or above - good attendance and the target we encourage all of our pupils to aim for, in order to ensure the best success at school.
- Below 96 percent - indicates early concerns and that possible barriers to attendance may be present.
- Below 90 percent - persistent absence: indicates more targeted support may be necessary.
- Below 50 percent - severe absence.

Small absences add up. Missing only one day every two weeks means more than three weeks of learning are lost each year. Alternatively, an attendance of 90 percent equals around nineteen days of school missed.



All of the information you have read here is further detailed in our attendance policy. There is also a lot more information in the policy about our attendance aims, procedures, and structured support, as well as a detailed FAQ section. The policy is available on our website and is also included in the information you have received in your welcome pack.

