

What if my child is ill?

- If your child is too unwell to come to school, you should contact the school office as early as possible on the first day of absence and then supply a signed note on their return confirming the illness.
- The school or school nurse can supply you with a list of the illnesses that require time off from school and the approximate length of time your child is likely to need off. Once your child has recovered, it is important that he/she returns to school as soon as possible to ensure he/she does not miss too much teaching – even if this means returning to school on the last day of a week or term.
- If your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, the headteacher can arrange for an interview with the school nurse to discuss the impact of this on his/her education and what additional support can be offered to help keep up. If your child's attendance falls to a level that is likely to adversely affect his/her long term educational success, the headteacher will arrange to discuss this with you personally and may ask you to supply medical evidence for any future absences.

I want to take my child out of school during term time for a family holiday. Is that ok?

- TDMS will only authorise leave of absences in exceptional circumstances. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm;
- Where parents are separated, only the parent with residence may make an application for holiday leave, and must do so on behalf of the other parent if that parent wishes to take the child out of school;
- If the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school;
- If you have to apply for holiday leave, you should do so BEFORE booking transport and accommodation to avoid disappointment;
- The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised;
- TDMS have strict criteria which they must follow when deciding when to authorise a leave of absence (the government guidelines can be found on the back of the application form). If your application does not meet these criteria, the headteacher will let you know that your holiday cannot be authorised;
- Leave of absences which are unauthorised should not be taken. If they do so, parents are committing an offence and, in certain cases, may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.

I'm going abroad on a work assignment and need to take my child. Is that ok?

- On rare occasions, parents may have to take their children out of school for extended periods, e.g. if working abroad, returning to their country of birth etc. If it appears likely that you may have to do this, please make an urgent appointment to discuss the implications for your child's education with the headteacher who will talk through options for ensuring minimum disruption to his/her learning.
- If you do not make the appropriate arrangements with the school, and/or do not return on the agreed date, the school may either report your child as 'Missing from Education' to the Local Authority and/or remove he/she from the school roll.

My family religion means my child needs to miss some days at school. What should I do?

- Parents may take leave of absence for days of religious observance related to the family religion.
- We ask that, if you are likely to need to do this, you inform the school of this when your child starts there and give as much notice as possible of the exact dates required.
- TDMS will take advice from local religious leaders as to the appropriate number of days to allow as authorised absence for each festival.

My child has a medical / dental appointment in school time. Should I re-book it in non-school time?

- TDMS prefers that parents make all but emergency appointments for medical and dental check-ups outside of the school day.
- If this is not possible, please give as much notice as possible of the intended appointment.
- If you need to collect your child from school for an appointment, you will be asked to sign him/her out of the building and back in again when you return. This is a legal requirement for Health and Safety purposes.
- If your child must attend a series of appointments, please ensure, where possible, that times and days are varied so that the same lesson is not always missed.

Sometimes my child arrives at school late. Is that ok?

- Punctuality is a legal requirement for school students.
- Being on time for school is very important. Many lessons in period 1 concentrate on the key skills such as literacy and numeracy at the beginning of the school day. Children who arrive late can miss important learning.
- Late arriving children also miss important information about what is happening during the day. This can leave a child confused and distressed when he/she does not know what is going on.
- We will monitor lateness carefully because it is often a precursor to later disaffection and absenteeism.
- If your child arrives late at school, he/she will have to be signed in and a parental explanation recorded. Persistent, severe or unexplained lateness can be classed as unauthorised absence and may be referred to the Local Authority.

What is unauthorised absence?

- Any absence that is either not explained by a parent or is not agreed by the school will be counted as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence is also known as truancy.
- Schools are required by law to report their unauthorised absences to both the Local Authority and the relevant government department (DfE).
- Persistent or severe levels of unauthorised absence will be referred to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) Service for intervention. EIS staff will make contact with families to find out why absence is high and will offer support to help with any issues that are preventing full attendance.
- However, if absence and/or lateness persists, the EIS has the responsibility to enforce attendance through legal interventions (Fixed Penalty Notices and/or prosecution) which may result in a fine, a Parenting Order or, in extreme cases, imprisonment.

My child doesn't want to attend school. What should I do?

- Most children will, at some point, tell you they do not want to go to school. This is quite normal. Always do your best to find out what has upset them and talk to your child about how to resolve any problems.
- If your child says he/she is not happy going to school, or shows other signs of disaffection, i.e. recurrent minor ailments that quickly get better once the school day has started, reluctance to do homework or share information from school, difficulties with friendships in school, concerns about bullying etc, speak to your child's Head of Learning as soon as possible.
- Try and be calm and organised at the beginning of the day so that there is no opportunity for your child to get over anxious.
- Praise every achievement at school, however small.
- Make sure you understand and support the school's behaviour policy, giving your child clear guidance about what is expected of them and why. If the problem persists, ask for professional advice, through the contacting your child's Head of Learning.

Some Important Facts

- There are 190 school days each year and 175 other days for shopping trips, birthday treats, non urgent appointments and holidays.
- One day a week absence is the equivalent over a school career of 2.5 whole years of education missed.
- 10 days holiday leave a year is the equivalent of two whole terms of education missed.
- 15 minutes of lateness a day equals one whole year of education missed.
- Half a day a week missed during Years 10 and 11 can mean the loss of a grade for every GCSE taken. Full attendance leads to the best educational outcomes – please give your child the best chance and make sure they are in school every day.