

What does irregular school attendance mean?

Irregular school attendance is where children have frequent absences from school. These absences may be one day, two days or a few days on a regular basis, which means that children do not complete full weeks of school.

Broken weeks (where a child is absent for part of the school week) mean that children's work is disrupted and they miss parts of sequences of learning.

A school week means any week where there is at least one day where school is open for pupils.

Over time, this can have a serious impact on children's academic and social development.

When do penalties apply?

Where a child has missed a minimum of 10 sessions of school due to unauthorised absence, a penalty for irregular school attendance may apply.

Each school day is 2 sessions, so 10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days.

The 10 sessions apply over a rolling period of 10-school weeks. For example, if your child has unauthorised absence in Week 1, Week 3 and Week 10 of any 10-week period, a fine may apply.

The local authority will issue a **Notice to Improve**, and this is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage with support to improve attendance.

A Notice to Improve is a set period of time given for an improvement in attendance to be shown. If there is further absence during a Notice to Improve period, a penalty may apply.

Attendance at our school is tracked on a daily, weekly, half-termly and rolling 10-week period.

What constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence?

Authorised absence is where the child is absent due to illness, attends a medical appointment, leave has been granted by the Head Teacher for exceptional circumstances, religious observance.

Unauthorised absence applies where the following apply:

- Parents have not contacted school to inform of their child's absence and school have been unable to establish the reason for absence (O code)
- Pupils arrive after the register closes (U code)
- Unauthorised leave of absence (Holidays – G code)
- School have requested medical evidence, and this has not been provided (O code)

Please note that both the above authorised and unauthorised lists are not exhaustive.