

Managing Attendance in Whiteabbey Primary School

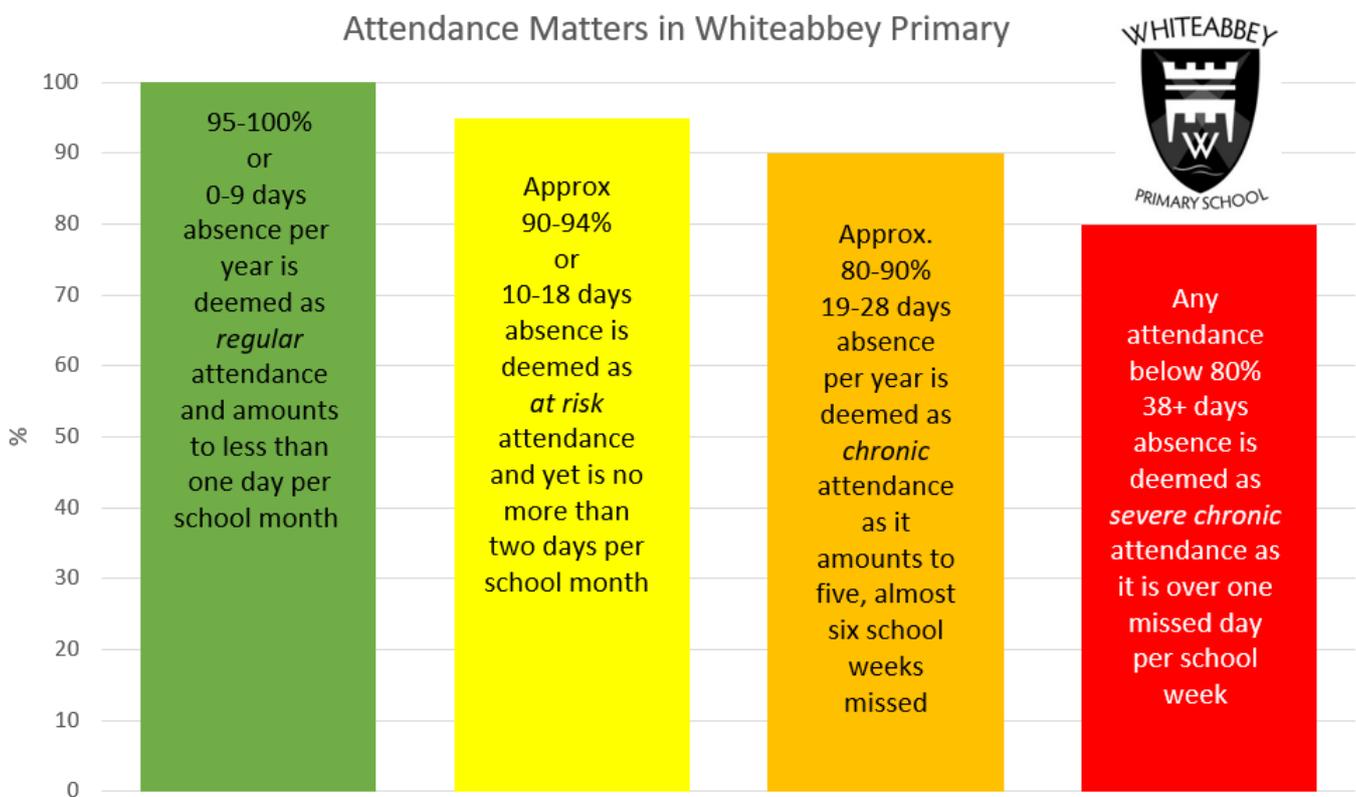
Your legal responsibilities as a parent

By law, all children of school age (aged four to sixteen) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering your child at a school. You as the parent are legally responsible for making sure they go regularly to school and are only off in exceptional circumstances.

The Education Authority (EA) is responsible for investigating if they believe your child is not getting the education they are entitled to and we as a school have a responsibility to report attendance to the Education and Welfare Officer.



The graph below illustrates the Department of Education categories for attendance and the relatively small number of days, over a school year that can move your child from *regular* to *at risk* attendance.



How to prevent your child from missing school

You can help prevent your child missing school by:

- having a routine from an early age and sticking to it
- making sure your child understands the importance of good attendance *and punctuality*
- making sure they understand the possible implications for themselves and you as a parent if they don't go to school
- taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
- discussing any problems they may have at school and letting their teacher or principal know about anything that is causing concern
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments or holidays during term time

To avoid disrupting your child's education, you should arrange (as far as possible), appointments and outings:

- after school hours
- at weekends
- during school holidays

Term time holidays

Term time holidays have been increasing over the last number of years. Parents should make every effort to make sure that their child does not miss school due to holiday plans. Schools are not obliged to agree to you taking your child on holiday during term time. They are entitled to record such holidays as being an unauthorised absence.

Problems affecting school attendance

A child's school attendance can be affected if there are problems with:

- bullying
- housing or care arrangements
- transport to and from school
- work and money
- other problems within the home environment

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance in Whiteabbey Primary School:

Our school will continuously monitor each child's attendance/late record. The school follows a two-step process for any children who are persistently absent/late for any reason:

1. Each month our Safeguarding & Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will review all absences/lateness and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 85% as a cumulative percentage over the school year.
2. It is noted if attendance/lateness is improving or deteriorating within the previous month. Following this analysis, a range of action may result:
 - a. At 95% school will send a standard "Attention Attendance!" reminder by ParentMail highlighting your child has fallen below 95% of possible attendance.
 - b. Below 90% attendance school will phone or write again to parents to discuss the matter and offer support.
 - c. School will send again a letter to the parents/carers of specific children whose attendance is causing concern. This will inform parents of their child's attendance, school's concerns and invite parents to contact school to avail of assistance in effecting improvement.

Very often these early interventions are successful in effecting improved attendance. The Pastoral Care team will liaise with the class teacher, SENCO and, when necessary, other professionals, if the need for support is identified.