



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

Issue 1 Spring Term 3 2026

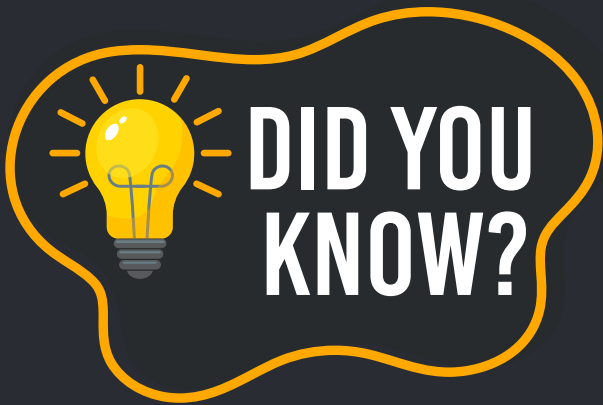
A termly newsletter for parents and carers.

Welcome to the very first edition of our new termly Attendance newsletter. At MNSP we're here to create a genuine partnership, supporting your child's education journey with understanding and practical guidance. We believe that when schools and families work together, every child can thrive.

We know life can be wonderfully complex and sometimes school attendance presents challenges. Whether it's health concerns, a period of anxiety, caring responsibilities or individual learning needs, we understand that these factors play a significant role. We truly hear you and are excited to embark on this journey with you, offering helpful insights and support each term.

This term's edition is packed with valuable insights. You'll also find practical tips for fostering a positive school routine, a look at recent attendance statistics and loads of practical advice.

We aim to equip you with knowledge and foster a supportive community as we navigate these important aspects of your child's education together.



Every school day matters; there is no "safe" level of absence below 96%
Even attendance in the low 90s can affect learning, routines and confidence

Attendance below 90% is classed nationally as Persistent Absence
This means a child is missing around half a day of school every week

Children with 96%+ attendance are more likely to achieve expected standards
Good attendance supports learning, confidence and friendships

IMPORTANT!

We recognise that, for some children, attending school every day can be challenging due to illness, anxiety or other complex needs. Where this is the case, we work with families to understand the barriers and put the right support in place. As a Trust, we invest tens of thousands of pounds each year in Education Welfare Services to ensure children and families receive timely, compassionate and practical support, so that every child can attend and engage in education as well as they are able.



Strong attendance supports post-16 choices
Good attendance helps pupils build habits, resilience, and references that support college, sixth form and apprenticeships.

Just 1% lower attendance in Year 11 can reduce a student's GCSE outcomes by around a quarter of a grade. Small dips really do add up

Why Attendance opens doors...

Attendance isn't just about being in school; it's about opening doors to opportunity, friendship, confidence and belonging. Every day your child attends, they're not just learning Maths or English; they're building routines, strengthening relationships and developing resilience that will serve them throughout life.

"Attendance isn't just about being in school; it's about opening doors to your child's future." - Year 9 parent

We understand that real-life pressures exist. Health challenges, anxiety, caring roles and special educational needs can all make consistent attendance difficult. **High expectations and compassion aren't opposites; they work together.** We believe in your child's potential and we're committed to removing barriers rather than adding pressure.



Friendships

Social connections develop through daily interaction and shared experiences. Consistent attendance helps children build meaningful relationships that provide support and joy.



Learning

Knowledge builds progressively; gaps become harder to fill over time. Regular attendance ensures children don't miss crucial building blocks in their education.



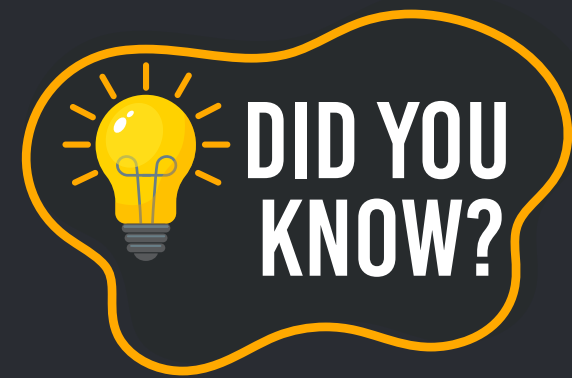
Confidence

Regular attendance builds self-belief and readiness for life's challenges. Children develop resilience through consistent engagement with school life.



Routines

Consistent patterns create security and prepare children for their future. Predictable rhythms help children feel safe and ready to learn.



Attendance is strongly linked to achievement

Children with attendance above 95–96% are far more likely to meet expected standards than those with lower attendance.

Source: Department for Education (DfE)
The link between absence and attainment 2025

Attendance below 90% is a national concern

The DfE defines attendance below 90% as Persistent Absence, meaning a child is missing around 1 day of school every fortnight.

Source: Department for Education (DfE)
School attendance guidance

Early support makes the biggest difference

Schools that work early with families when attendance dips see better long-term outcomes than those who wait until absence becomes entrenched.

Source: Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Improving attendance guidance

Of course, some illness can't be helped and when children are unwell, they should be at home.

We're always here to listen, support families and work together to help every child attend well when they are able.

IMPORTANT!

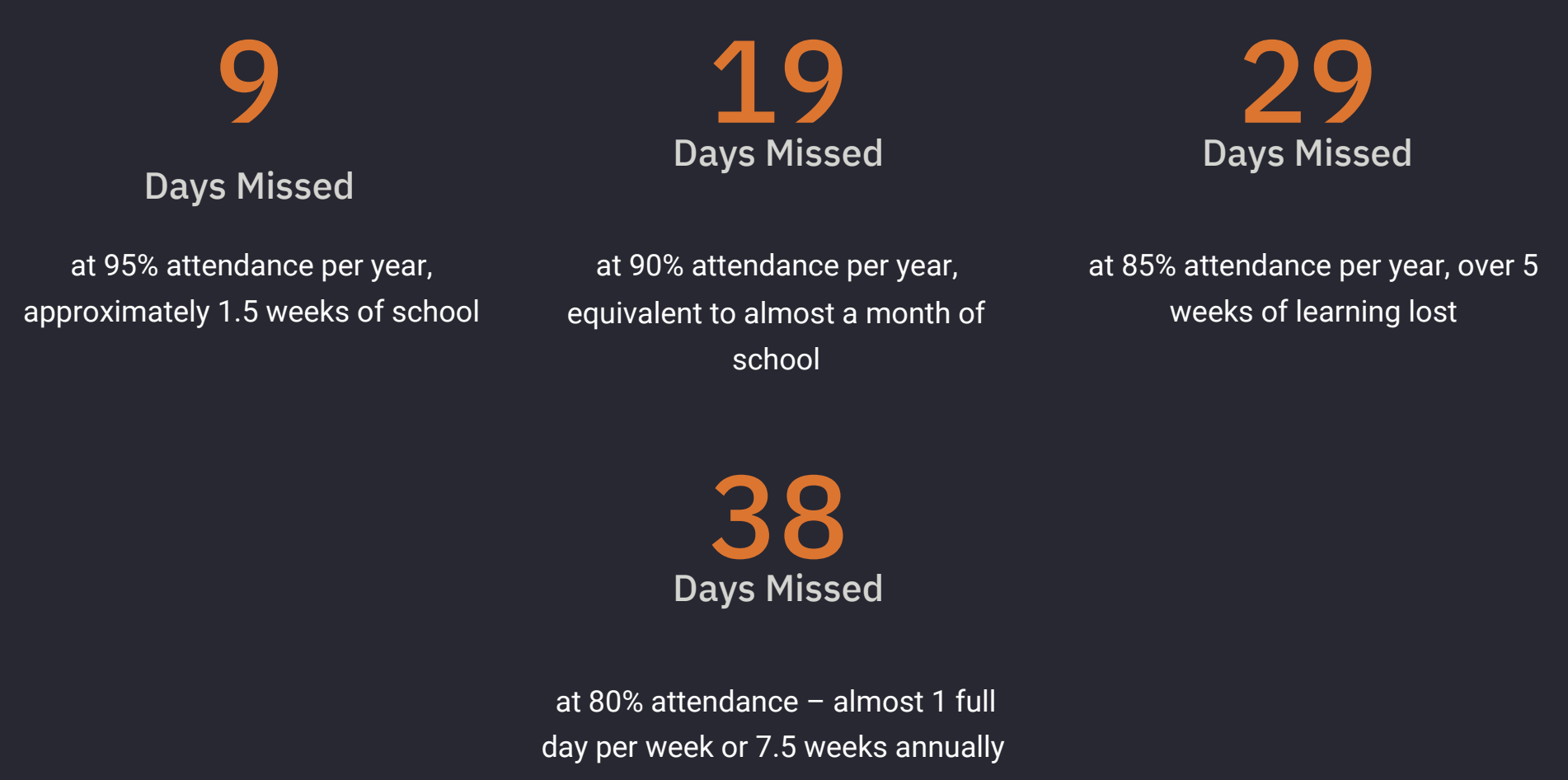
This newsletter exists because we believe in partnership. You know your child best. Schools have expertise in education and safeguarding. Together, we can create the conditions for your child to thrive. This is about working *with* you, not doing attendance *to* you.

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The days add up faster than we think

Attendance isn't just about showing up; it's a foundational habit that shapes a child's entire educational journey. While a single day off might seem insignificant, these individual absences can quickly accumulate, creating patterns that are harder to break over time. What starts as an occasional day can, without proactive support, evolve into more frequent absences, subtly altering a child's engagement and experience at school. Furthermore, research indicates that attendance patterns established in primary school often carry through to secondary school, impacting academic success and social integration during these crucial formative years.

It's easy to think that a day here or there doesn't matter much. But attendance is cumulative and even small percentages represent significant time away from learning, friendships and routines. Understanding how these days add up helps us all see why consistency matters so much. The figures here typically relate to a standard state school year of 190 days:



Missing school doesn't just affect academic lessons; it deeply impacts the holistic school experience. A child might miss a crucial explanation in Maths, but also the laughter with friends during break time, the collaborative spirit of a group project, or the development of an inside joke that builds a sense of belonging. These seemingly small social moments and shared experiences are vital for a child's emotional well-being and sense of connection to their peers and the school community.

Psychologically, regular absence can initiate a "disconnection cycle." When a child misses school, they might feel a little behind academically, or they might feel left out of social circles. This can lead to increased anxiety about returning, making the next absence seem easier, which then reinforces the feeling of being disconnected. This self-reinforcing pattern can make it increasingly difficult for a child to re-engage, impacting their confidence, mental health and that crucial sense of belonging.



Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child is educated. This can be through regular school attendance or if parents choose, through Elective Home Education. If parents opt for home education, they take full responsibility for providing a suitable education.

IMPORTANT!

The good news? With early intervention and a strong partnership between home and school, we can absolutely turn things around together. This might involve a conversation with the school's attendance lead to understand underlying issues, exploring flexible timetables, access to mental health support or practical assistance with transport or routines. We are committed to working proactively with families to remove barriers, providing tailored support and guidance to help every child re-establish consistent attendance and thrive both academically and socially.

For example, a child repeatedly missing Mondays might find it harder to catch up on weekend news, feel out of sync with project updates and become an infrequent participant in classroom discussions.

To support every child, schools meticulously track and monitor attendance patterns. This isn't about judgment, but about identifying trends early and understanding the root causes of absence. By analysing data, schools can spot when a child's attendance dips below expected levels or when certain days are consistently missed, allowing for targeted and timely intervention.



Scan the QR code to read about how schools can work well with parents and carers

Practical support for parents & carers



We understand that attendance letters can sometimes feel worrying or frustrating. We take great care with our communications and always aim to be respectful, supportive and clear. Schools are legally required to include certain information in attendance letters, including reminders about parental responsibilities and the law. This is not intended to cause concern or offence, but to ensure transparency and that all families receive the same clear information. Our intention is never to criticise or judge, but to work in partnership with parents and carers to support children to attend well and thrive at school. If you have concerns about any communication you receive, we encourage you to contact the school so we can talk it through together.

01

Contact early: Don't wait

At the very **first sign of reluctance** (e.g., "I don't want to go to school today" for more than 2 days), or if your child has missed **just one unexplained day**, reach out. Send an email to the school or call the school office immediately to flag concerns. This opens a dialogue before issues escalate.

02

Be honest & transparent

Schools are partners, not adversaries. If there are family stresses, mental health concerns, or specific anxieties your child is experiencing, **share them openly**. Phrases like: "We're noticing some anxiety around mornings, and I wanted to share so we can work together." or "There's been a change at home, and it seems to be impacting their desire to attend." build trust and help the school understand the root cause.

03

Know your contacts

Start with your child's **class teacher or form tutor** for daily updates and classroom-specific concerns. For recurring or more complex issues, contact the **school's attendance officer, pastoral lead, or SENDCo** (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). Keep their direct email or phone number handy. If you don't know these contacts, ask the school office.

04

Share contextual information

Provide specific details that help the school tailor support. For example, mention: "They get very overwhelmed in busy corridors," "They're struggling with a particular friendship group," or "We've started a new medication which sometimes makes them drowsy in the mornings." This allows the school to implement specific adjustments like offering a quiet route to class or a later start.

05

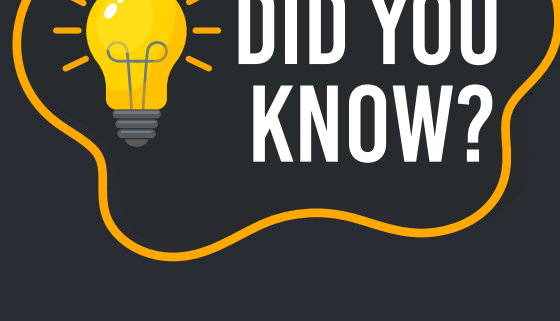
Prevent formal escalation

By engaging early and openly, you can prevent attendance issues from moving to more formal, legal stages (e.g., warning letters, penalty notices). Early partnership conversations focus on **support and solutions** (e.g., reduced timetable, in-school support, external agency referrals), rather than punitive measures. Your proactive communication is key to keeping the focus on your child's well-being.



Quick-Reference Checklist

- **Ask for priority learning:**
What key lessons will they miss?
- **Re-establish routines:**
Consistency is calming for children.
- **Focus on attendance before perfection:** Getting them in is the first step.
- **Celebrate small wins:** Every day at school is an achievement.
- **Keep communication open:**
With school and your child.
- **Don't try to catch up everything at once**



By law, schools cannot authorise holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made in advance and are decided by the headteacher/Principal.

When a child is absent from school and the reason is unknown, schools are legally required to make welfare checks.

This is a normal safeguarding process designed to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

This duty arises from Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and school safeguarding responsibilities, which require prompt action when a child's whereabouts or safety are unclear.

Building strong routines at home

Consistent home routines are the bedrock of good attendance. They provide predictability, reduce stress, and help children feel prepared for the school day.



Consistent sleep schedule (Age-Specific)

Ages 5-12: Aim for 9-12 hours.

Set bedtime between **7:30-9:00 PM**, wake-up **6:30-7:30 AM**.

Ages 13-18: Aim for 8-10 hours.

Set bedtime between **9:00-10:00 PM**, wake-up **6:00-7:00 AM**.

Consistency helps regulate melatonin production, ensuring deeper sleep crucial for concentration and mood. Avoid screens for at least an hour before bed.



Visual morning routine checklist

Create a simple checklist using pictures for younger children or bullet points for older ones, laminated or on a whiteboard. Include: **1. Get Dressed, 2. Eat Breakfast, 3. Brush Teeth, 4. Pack Bag, 5. Grab Coat/Shoes**. Display it prominently and practice the sequence. This empowers independence and reduces arguments, saving valuable time each morning.



Dedicated homework/study time

Designate a consistent time, like **4:00-5:00 PM** right after a snack, or **6:30-7:30 PM** after dinner. Ensure a quiet, well-lit space free from distractions (no TV/phones). This signals that learning is a priority and helps avoid last-minute stress or forgotten assignments, reducing morning anxiety.



Weekend & evening planning session

Every **Sunday evening**, take **15 minutes** to review the upcoming week as a family. Check school emails, pack lunches/snacks for Monday, discuss appointments, extracurriculars and any known school changes or deadlines. This minimises surprises, allows children to mentally prepare and ensures everything is ready for a smooth start to the school week.

Navigating morning anxiety & resistance

School refusal or anxiety can be incredibly challenging for both children and parents. Here are strategies to help ease morning difficulties:

You don't have to do this alone: When and how to seek additional support

Don't hesitate to reach out if you feel overwhelmed or your child's attendance issues are persistent despite your best efforts. Early intervention is key.

Signs to look for that might indicate a need for more support:

- **Prolonged & unexplained absences:** Your child has missed **3 or more consecutive days** without a clear, authorised reason, or has a pattern of missing 1-2 days every week for a month.
- **Severe emotional distress:** Intense, persistent crying, panic attacks, or extreme withdrawal every morning before school, lasting **longer than 2 weeks**.
-

Significant behavioural changes: New or escalating aggression, regression (e.g., bedwetting), or extreme mood swings occurring primarily on school days.

Declining academic performance: A noticeable drop of **1-2 grades** (or equivalent) in multiple subjects directly coinciding with increased absences.



If you're worried that attendance issues may be developing, please get in touch with us early so we can support you and your child together.



Who to contact & why:

- **School Pastoral Lead/SENCo:** For emotional support, in-school adjustments, anxiety management plans, or suspected learning difficulties.
- **School Nurse/Counsellor:** For health concerns impacting attendance, mental health support, or confidential discussions with your child.
- **Your GP (General Practitioner):** For medical assessment of physical symptoms, mental health diagnoses, or referrals to specialist services (e.g., CAMHS).
- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):** For moderate to severe mental health difficulties like anxiety disorders, depression, or school phobia (often requires a GP or school referral).
- **Local Family Support Services/Charities:** For practical support with routines, parenting strategies, or accessing other community resources.

Managing illness decisions: When to stay home

It can be tough to know whether to send your child to school when they feel a bit under the weather. Here's a general guide:



Fever (38°C / 100.4°F+)

Keep them home if their temperature is **38°C (100.4°F) or higher**. They must be **fever-free for a full 24 hours without fever-reducing medication** (like paracetamol or ibuprofen) before they can return to school. This prevents the spread of infection.



Vomiting or Diarrhoea

Your child must stay home until **at least 48 hours after their last episode** of vomiting or diarrhoea. This strict timeframe is crucial to prevent the highly contagious nature of stomach bugs from spreading rapidly through the school community.



Contagious Conditions (e.g., Conjunctivitis, Chickenpox)

For conditions like conjunctivitis, keep them home until the discharge has cleared. For chickenpox, they must stay home until **all spots have crusted over** (usually 5-7 days from rash onset). Always follow specific school or health authority guidelines and a doctor's note may be required for their return.



Minor Colds/Sore Throat/Mild Cough

If symptoms are **mild** (e.g., sniffles, slight cough, **mild sore throat**) and your child feels otherwise well and is energetic, they can usually attend. Ensure they practice good hand hygiene. Communicate with the school if symptoms worsen throughout the day or if you have any concerns.

Building resilience and positive attitudes

Fostering a positive mindset about school is a long-term strategy that helps children navigate challenges and embrace learning.



Celebrate achievements (Big & Small)

Acknowledge their efforts and progress daily. Say: "**I noticed how hard you worked on your maths today!**" or "**You were so brave going into school even though you felt nervous.**" This builds confidence, reinforces positive behaviours, and fosters a sense of accomplishment, encouraging continued engagement.



Encourage problem-solving skills

Instead of immediately solving every school-related issue, guide them: "**That sounds tricky. What do you think you could do about it?**" or "**Who at school might be able to help you with that?**" This empowers them to think critically, build independence, and develop coping strategies for minor challenges.



Foster a growth mindset

Teach them that mistakes are learning opportunities. Use phrases like: "**It's okay to not know everything right now; that's why we go to school!**" or "**Every time you try something new, your brain gets stronger, even if it feels hard at first.**" Focus on effort and persistence over innate talent to build resilience.



Actively support school engagement

Show genuine interest. Ask specific questions like: "**What was the most interesting thing you learned in history today?**" instead of just "How was school?" Attend school events (sports day, concerts, parent-teacher evenings), volunteer if possible, and engage with school communications. Your involvement signals that school is important and a shared family priority.

Your questions answered

Each term, we tackle the questions parents are really asking. Here are this term's responses:

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What if my child is anxious every morning?

Morning anxiety is extremely common and doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. Consistent routines help: same wake-up time (even weekends), visual schedules, and avoiding lengthy negotiations. Keep mornings calm and predictable. If anxiety persists despite routines, contact school ; they may identify triggers you can't see from home, or recommend additional support like counselling or an anxiety management plan.



How do medical appointments affect attendance?

Medical appointments during school hours are authorised absences when evidenced and unavoidable. However, schools will encourage you to book appointments outside school hours where possible, and to return your child to school after appointments rather than keeping them home all day. For ongoing medical needs, discuss a healthcare plan with school so everyone understands your child's requirements.



When should I worry about attendance?

If your child's attendance drops below 95%, or if you notice patterns (certain days, certain lessons, physical symptoms), it's time to have a conversation with school. Early intervention prevents entrenchment. Trust your instincts; if you're worried, reach out. Schools would always rather support early than intervene late.



Can I take holiday during term time?

Head teachers can only authorise term-time holidays in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised holiday absence can result in penalty notices. We understand the financial pressures families face, but term-time holidays disrupt learning and can trigger attendance concerns that affect future opportunities.



Looking Ahead to term 4.....

Next term's Focus

Punctuality and communications–

Why those extra 10 -15 minutes matter, and practical strategies for smoother mornings. Why school letters can appear annoying to parents but why they are crucial.

Dealing with anxiety

In our next edition, we will take a closer look at how you can support your child with anxiety and its impact on attendance.

Ongoing Support

Remember: support is always available. You don't have to wait for the next newsletter to ask for help. Contact your school.

This newsletter exists to build community, share knowledge and remind you that you're not navigating attendance alone. We're here, we're listening and we're committed to working in partnership with every family.

Please contact your school if you have any questions or worries about attendance.

