

## Why is it important for children not to miss school?

Most parents want their children to get on well in life. Nowadays, it is more important than ever to have a good education behind you if you want opportunities in adult life. Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school or alternative provision regularly.

If children do not attend school regularly they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help your child later on. Employers want to recruit people who are reliable. So children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of getting a good job.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher, and the other children in the class.

### What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child?

Research has shown that children who are not in school are most vulnerable and are easily drawn into crime. Those children who play truant are more likely to offend than those that do not.

Research also shows that:

- *Less than 40% of pupils* in secondary schools with an average of 17 days or more absence get 5 good National 5 Awards (Grades A to C) *compared to more than 90%* in schools with an average of less than 8 days absence.
- Many parents are surprised how quickly their children accumulate 17 days absence.

## The world is run by those who turn up

Attending school every day =  
100% attendance.

Attending 4 ½ days a week =  
90% attendance =  
*4 weeks missed per year*

Attending 4 days a week =  
80% attendance =  
*more than half a term missed per year or 2 full years missed over the course of their school career.*

Attending 3 ½ days each week =  
70% attendance =  
*more than a quarter of the school year missed.*

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a *whole 2 years* from school.

Being late for school reduces learning time.

If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will *miss three days of learning each year.*

If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will *miss 2 weeks of learning each year.*

**Make every minute count!**

# Banchory Academy



## School Attendance

## Information for Parents and Carers

# School Attendance

Supporting regular attendance at school is a priority because of its impact on teaching and learning and on levels of attainment. There are well proven links between regular attendance at school and levels of individual pupil attainment.

Section 30 of The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 requires parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Regulation 7 of The Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment etc. Regulations 1993 requires each child's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as authorised (e.g. approved by the local authority) or unauthorised (e.g. unexplained by the parent/guardian (truancy) or excluded from school).

## Definitions of Attendance & Absence

The following definitions are taken from The Scottish Government publication 'A guide for parents about school attendance'.

**Attendance** is defined as participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school. In addition to actual attendance within the school premises, this encompasses a range of other activities within the category of attendance (out of school but marked present), such as :

- Going to college or to another unit outside the school
- Visits to outdoor centres; this could be for the day or for residential
- Interviews and visits to do with college or careers events.
- Sports, musical or drama activities organised by the school in school hours

- Study leave during the National Exam timetable
- Going outside the school for support with learning or behaviour if it is arranged or agreed by the school
- Getting tuition if your child is in hospital or tuition at home if this has been agreed
- Being on work experience

### Authorised Absence

- Illness where no learning provision is made
- Medical and dental appointments
- Attending a meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or if they are going to a Children's Hearing, care review or court
- Involvement in an activity and the school agrees in advance
- Bereavement
- Religious Ceremony or wedding of someone very close to pupil
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in your family
- Arranged absence in relation to children in Gypsy/Traveller families
- Failure of school or service transport due to bad weather, breakdown, etc
- Your family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative
- Period of exclusion

As long as you have informed the school of the reason why your child is off, and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called **authorised absences**.

### Unauthorised Absence

- Most family holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstance
- Parent-condoned absence where the school does not agree there is a satisfactory reason for absence
- Truancy, with or without the knowledge of the parent
- All other unexplained absence is recorded as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation is subsequently provided
- Where pupil has to take on Young Carer responsibilities, pending the assessment and allocation of support
- During disputes, such as relating to the return of a pupil after an exclusion

## Non-Attendance at School

Where there is initial concern at school level regarding unexplained/ill explained absences, we will contact parents/carers and request an explanation.

If we remain concerned about the reasons given (or not) for a pupil's absence, or there has not been an improvement in attendance, the Head Teacher will arrange a meeting to discuss attendance. This may involve school staff and other appropriate agencies.

If attendance issues continue, the case may be referred to the Authority or to the Children's Panel for further action.