

school attendance matters...



...when it's
your child's future...

VALE of GLAMORGAN



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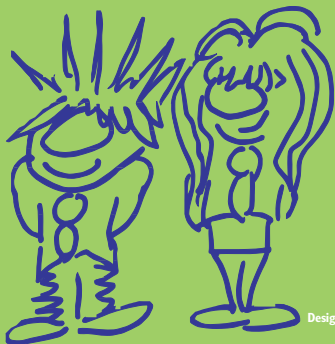
note to parents...

- **Part One** of this booklet is for you and your child to look at together and talk about.
- **Part Two** is information for Parents.
- **Part Three** is information about what schools can do.

school attendance matters..

...it's your child's future...

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part one

Why should
I go to school?

● Education is **too good** to miss!

Here's what the children say:

-to learn more about everything.
-to have fun making and doing things.
-to share what we can do.
-to get a good job.
-to get to college or university.
-to find out about the world.
-to be happy with friends.
-to work together with everyone.
-to get good examination results.



our
child's future...



Why does coming to school every day matter?

- If you don't come to school **regularly**:

....you don't know how to do the work.

....you get left behind.

....you lose touch.

....you feel a bit left out.

....you have to make friends again.



- Do you know?

....your school is judged by your attendance.

....your progress is severely affected if your attendance drops below 90%.

- 3 days missed in a half term means less than

91%

attendance.

school attendance matters...

punctuality⁴

It doesn't matter
if we're a bit late,
though does it?

- Here are some of the reasons why it does:
 -being late - it looks bad on your record because it counts as an unauthorised absence (truancy).
 -being late - you miss instructions or interrupt lessons.
 -good time-keeping helps you become reliable and organised, two qualities which employers value.
 -being late for school doesn't make you feel good.
 -being late for school makes you the odd one out.
 -being punctual helps your chances of a successful future.

- Get into a good routine and make a good start to the day



part two

WHAT ARE THE RULES ABOUT ATTENDANCE?

Parents have to make sure their children aged 5 - 16 years receive full-time education and that they attend regularly and stay in school.



- **It's the Law!**

Parents can be taken to Court for breaking this law.

(Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

The policy from the Government Department for Education (May 1994) also says:

“Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.”

The Act also mentions that:

“Parents need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This includes making sure that pupils complete homework on time and that their children keep the school rules.”



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WHAT ARE THE RULES ABOUT ABSENCES?

- **1.** It's the **PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY** to let the school know the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible, preferably on the first day.
- **2.** Parents and Carers can only explain absences. **THEY CANNOT AUTHORISE THEM.** The school decides whether explanations about absence are acceptable and if they can be authorised.
- **3.** An absence for an **UNAUTHORISED** or **UNEXPLAINED** reason is **UNAUTHORISED** and appears as **TRUANCY** on your child's record.
- **4.** If your child has too many authorised or unauthorised absences, then someone from the school or the Education Welfare Service will contact you to find out what can be done to help get your child back into school regularly.



UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- You should **not** keep your child from school or allow him/her to stay at home:

.....to look after the house or other members of the family.

.....to go shopping.

.....to visit relatives.

.....for birthdays.

.....because it's raining.

.....because you got up late.

.....because they don't want to go or you don't feel like accompanying them.



HOLIDAYS

...Taken in Term Time

- Please don't take your children out of school for holidays.

.....you do not have an automatic right to withdraw your child for holidays.

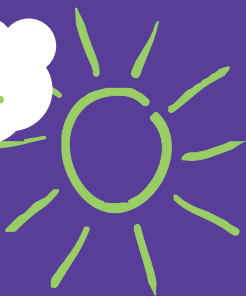
.....10 days taken for holidays means your child will only have 94% attendance.

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....The Local Authority is requesting Schools to discourage this practice.

....Absences for holiday purposes may be recorded as unauthorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances when the Headteacher may exercise discretion

...it's your child's future...



AUTHORISED ABSENCES

- Only keep your child off school if:

....he or she is genuinely too ill to attend.



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SO, WHAT TO DO F...

...my child needs time
off school?

.....stop and think - whether time off is really essential. **PUT SCHOOL FIRST** whenever possible

.....don't let your child stay away from school unless it's absolutely unavoidable.

.....please plan appointments, shopping trips etc. for after school and at weekends

.....talk it over with someone in school if you know in advance. If it is a sudden or unexpected reason for absence, please let the school know.

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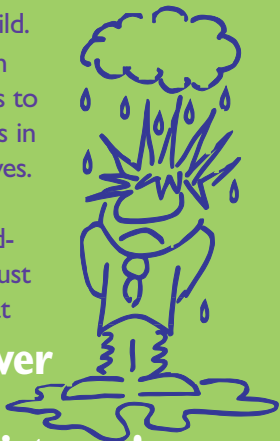
ABSENCE...

...can hinder solutions to problems that we could be sorting out together

Staying away from school and not wanting to go to school for a variety of reasons (like tummy ache, feeling sick etc.) often means that there is something which is worrying your child.

Even minor matters can be very big worries or concerns to your child. You may spot changes in the way your child usually behaves. Other things may happen like sleepless nights, bad dreams, bed-wetting, pretending to be ill or just looking for reasons for staying at home.

- **Talking it over HELPS - be a good listener!**



Talking about worries and feelings to someone who really listens and accepts the way they feel is often enough to give young people the support to be able to face difficulties.

No one should be left to feel unhappy, guilty or threatened. No one should feel as if they can't do their schoolwork.

- **Don't let absences just build up....**

The Education Welfare Officer can help to:

-find out what is causing the absence to happen.
-think about what can be done to change things.



WHAT CAN I DO...

...to help my child have good attendance?

-you have to believe that it really matters.
-you have to care about your child's education.

● Make sure your child:

-has a reasonable bedtime.
-gets up at the same time every school day.
-has his/her own alarm clock.
-asks a friend to call in the morning.
-keeps a diary of homework and things to remember.
-checks what they need for the next day.
-puts clothes and equipment out ready for the next day.
-has a regular time and place to do homework.



● It helps if:

-parents take an interest in school work.
-parents find out from school what they can do to help.
-parents praise their children's efforts.

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WHAT HAPPENS IF...

...the school sends your child home?

● This will only happen when:

- Your child is taken ill and is unable to remain in school in which case you will always be contacted to make arrangements to collect your child.
- The school closes temporarily due to unforeseen circumstances:- e.g. very bad weather fire or other serious structural damage in which case you will always receive official notification.
- The Headteacher decides to exclude your child for a particular reason in which case you will be contacted immediately by telephone if possible and always followed by written confirmation in each case. There are procedures for exclusions both Fixed Term and Permanent which schools have to follow.
- In the unlikely event of your child arriving home without any telephone contact, please contact the school immediately.
- Remember you will always be contacted if there is a need for your child to be sent home.

ce
rs.....



¹³ part three

● How will schools support good attendance?

Schools aim to be safe and happy places where children feel successful.

All schools keep careful records of attendance. Some schools use a computer system to register pupils' attendance every morning and afternoon, and track students throughout the day. This system prints a list of times when each pupil has been away without a reason being given by parents.

So schools will:

.....**ASK FOR NOTES** and explanations from parents for every single absence, even just part of a day.

.....**CONTACT YOU** about any unexplained absences.

.....**LET YOU KNOW** if your child's absence or lateness is causing concern, and work with you to find a way of improving it.

.....**MAKE CLEAR** the times for beginning and ending of morning and afternoon sessions.

.....**TELL YOU** of any changes or special dates for the term.

.....**INCLUDE** a report of your child's attendance at progress meetings with you.

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.....**LISTEN** to your worries and concerns and either agree what action we can all take, or find someone else who can help.

.....**WORK** in partnership with the Education Welfare Service and any other organisations offering support to children and families.

.....**WELCOME** children back after they have been away and find ways of helping them to fit back into friendship circles and catch up on missed work.

.....**PRAISE** and record good attendance and also improvements to punctuality and attendance.

.....**WORK** to make sure that there is good behaviour, respect and consideration for others.

.....**SUIT** the learning tasks to each individual child and encourage them to have high expectations of themselves.

.....**ASK** you to sign a home school contract which identifies responsibility of both school and parent.

**Every child needs to experience
pleasure in
learning and take
pride in SUCCESS**



- For further information on...

school attendance matters...

...please contact the school your child attends or the Education Welfare Service at the address listed below:

**Education Welfare Service
Pupil Support Service
Directorate of Learning and Development
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Holton Road
Barry
CF63 4RU**



Telephone us on:

01446 709171

A copy of this document is available in large print and other formats on request