



Dear Parents and Carers,

The Importance of Regular School Attendance

I hope this letter finds you well.

At Hertfordshire County Council, we are committed to ensuring every child receives a high-quality education. A key part of this is regular school attendance, which plays a vital role in your child's academic progress, personal development, and future opportunities.

While we understand that children may occasionally be unable to attend due to illness, frequent absences can lead to them falling behind their peers—both academically and socially.

Why Attendance Matters

Attending school regularly helps children to:

- Achieve stronger academic outcomes
- Build friendships and develop social skills
- Strengthen emotional wellbeing and resilience
- Establish positive habits for future education and employment
- Engage fully in school life and activities

Our Commitment to You

In Hertfordshire, we are dedicated to working with families to remove barriers to regular attendance wherever possible. We recognise that challenges may arise, and we are here to support you and your child.

Key Expectations

We ask that all families support the following expectations:

- Children attend school every day it is open, unless they are unwell or have a valid statutory reason
- Children arrive on time and ready to learn
- Families follow the school's attendance policy
- Parents/carers notify the school promptly when their child is absent unexpectedly
- Medical appointments are scheduled outside of school hours where possible
- Requests for leave of absence are made in advance and only in exceptional circumstances

Term time holidays

Following changes to legislation introduced by the Department for Education (DfE) in August 2024, schools are now required to treat requests for term-time leave—such as holidays—as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such cases, a penalty notice must be considered.

Exceptional circumstances are typically unavoidable, one-off events. Holidays taken for leisure or recreation do not meet this threshold.

If you believe your request involves exceptional circumstances, please discuss it with your child's Headteacher. Schools must consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and background of the request. If leave is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days permitted.

Please note:

- All requests must be made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.
- The decision to authorise or unauthorise absence rests solely with the Headteacher.

Schools may issue a penalty notice for unauthorised leave. Once issued:

- There is no statutory right of appeal.
- The Local Authority may only withdraw a notice if it was issued incorrectly.
- If the penalty is not paid within the required timeframe, the Local Authority will initiate legal proceedings.

If you disagree with the Headteacher's decision, you should follow the school's complaints policy.

We know that you want the best for your child. By ensuring that any leave of absence is taken during designated school holidays, you are helping to support your child's learning, development, and attendance.

How You Can Help

You play a crucial role in supporting your child's attendance. You can help by:

- Encouraging daily, punctual attendance
- Communicating with the school about any concerns or barriers
- Engaging with any support offered to avoid the need for more formal interventions

If you have any concerns or need support, please contact your child's school in the first instance. Schools are here to work with families to ensure every child can thrive.

For further resources and support, please visit:

- [Families First](#)
- Hertfordshire SEND Local Offer

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Best regards,

Tony Fitzpatrick

Director of Education | Children Services