# Attendance Matters

WE'RE IN SCHOOL EVERYDAY

**October 2026**

**Did you know?**
Future success starts with good attendance

Dear Children and Families,

We hope you have all had a wonderful start to the school year.

We are looking forward to seeing all of our pupils back in school again when we return after half-term! As half-term approaches, we would like to note that taking time out of school around holidays (for example, early departure or late returns or missing the days before or after a school break) directly impacts your child's learning and experiences. Ensuring your child is present in school every school day helps them make the most out of every opportunity.

## Attendance at WISE Academies – it's more than just a number to us.

Attendance is so much more to us than a number or a percentage. Every child in our school is individual, with their own background, their own lived experiences and their own challenges (some temporary, some longer term) that may be impacting on their ability to attend school.

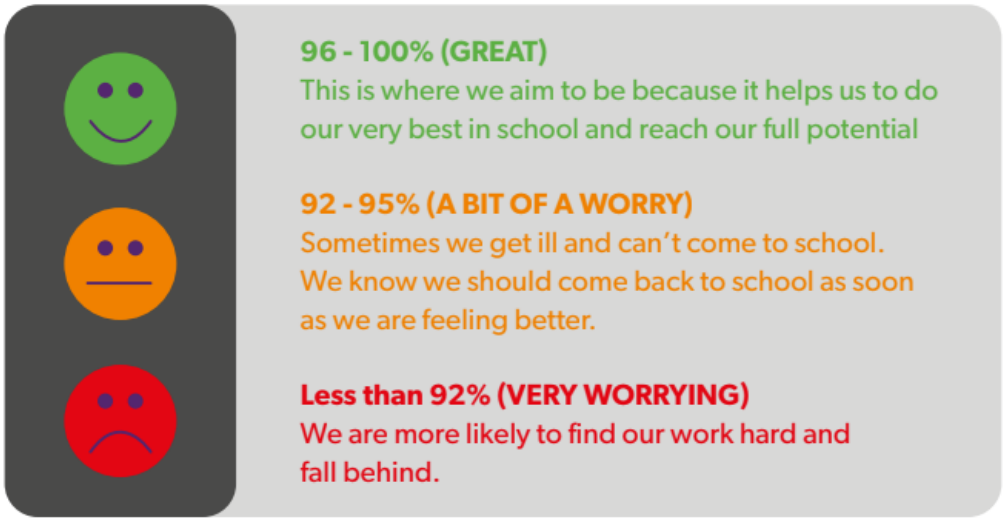
When children walk through our doors each morning, they aren't just attending school - they are laying the foundation for their future. Every day brings unique opportunities that shapes their journey.

Good attendance and punctuality are important for:

# CHILDREN WHO MISS SCHOOL MISS OUT

At WISE Academies, we have ambition for all of our pupils and set high expectations of excellent attendance, regardless of age. It is our belief that all pupils can strive to be in school on every session that school is open.

We care very much about our pupils and in order to help us to understand who may need extra help to access as much of school as possible, we colour code attendance according to the amount of learning pupils are missing out on across the year. This helps us to easily monitor so as to ensure we can offer the right help at the right time. We take into account the individual circumstances around pupils that may impact on their time in school:




## Support & Understanding Barriers to Attendance

We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and, therefore, we recognise that 100% attendance may not always be possible for some children but we believe that with the right support, we can help children to be in school as much as possible. This is why we talk to parents, carers and pupils regularly about attendance so we can understand what challenges our pupils are facing and aim to offer any support available. We want to work in partnership to give all children the very best start in life. We have an 'Open Door' policy and would be happy to arrange a meeting with you to talk through any worries you may have.

The NHS have provided a useful guide and website for parents:
https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

Healthier Together
Improving the health of babies, children and young people throughout North East and North Cumbria

Another helpful NHS tool is the Healthier Together app for parents. Here you can register your child and describe their symptoms. The app will then give advice as to what would be the best steps to take from a medical perspective. Click on the link below for more information:
NHS Healthier Together

# What do I need to do about my child's attendance?

## Ensure your child attends school on every day that the school is open.

There are only exceptional circumstances where a child would need to miss school:

- Illness of the child (not the parent) – a child may still be able to attend school with low-level illnesses (please seek advice if unsure)
- Religious Observance
- Funeral of a close family member
- Exceptional circumstances such as an emergency

## Please contact school on each day of absence

It is vital that we know the reason why your child will not be in school. Vague terms such as "ill" or "unwell" may not be authorised without further explanation. Where a reason is not provided, our office staff will ring home as part of our safeguarding procedures to establish where your child is. Unexplained and/or regular absences or frequent lateness could trigger a home visit and/or a meeting in school. We will let you know if we become concerned.

## Please ensure that your child arrives for school on time.

A child can only be marked as present if they are physically at school. Lateness disrupts the learning of all pupils in the class, not just that of the child arriving late. If your child is late due to a medical appointment then an appropriate code will be used and the absence will be authorised (though the child will still have an absence recorded for that session).

## Please try to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours, where possible.

In most cases we will ask for a view of the appointment text or letter. If attendance is already poor, then you may be asked to provide further supporting information before we can authorise it.

## Send your child back to school as soon as they are well enough, even if it is a Friday.

Every day really does count. It is very hard for a child to catch up with missed learning, even if it is just one day. There is so much going on in and outside of our classrooms from which all pupils benefit. Missing school is missing out. Whilst we try our best to support children to catch up, it is impossible to replace a whole day's teaching.

## Check out term dates on our website so you never accidentally miss the first day back.

Every day really does count.

## If you're going away for the weekend, why not ask to collect your child from school a little bit earlier instead of them missing the whole day.

It is important that you are open and honest about reasons for absence. We would rather know where a child is and that they are safe, rather than missing.

## If your child is tired after an action-packed weekend, still send them in on Monday.

This is a perfect way to help build their resilience for when they're older.

# The Law

We have a statutory obligation to follow procedures when parents / carers do not ensure that their child is attending school as often as they can. Further details of this can be found in our School Attendance Policy on our website and within the following statutory guidance from the DfE:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026) - Department for Education

## Stage 1 – Inform parents, School Monitoring and Interventions

Daily monitoring of absences, follow up of all unexplained absences or patterns of concern. Discussions with parents and pupils as appropriate. Home visits.

Weekly monitoring via Pupil Attendance Tracker

Parents informed of attendance concern

Internal monitoring considered for children under 96% (if appropriate)

Rewards and whole school promotion of attendance

**If attendance drops, progress to Stage 2**

## Stage 2 – Formalised Action Plan / Meeting with parents (may include Trust Attendance Lead and/or LA Attendance Officer if applicable)

Parents invited to school for a formal planning meeting e.g. Attendance Contract / Attendance Support Plan to discuss attendance and possible further supportive interventions.

Action Plan agreed – all parties to sign.

**If attendance improves, go back to Stage 1**

**If attendance drops, progress to Stage 3**

**NB: An Attendance Contract, Individual Attendance Plan or Formal Attendance Meeting, may be offered at any %, at the discretion of the Senior Attendance Champion, if there is a minimum of 1 unauthorised absence.**

## Stage 3 – Referral to Local Authority Attendance Team (if not already involved at Stage 2)

After Stage 1 and Stage 2 have not been successful, and after all sources of support have been offered, the school will make a referral to their relevant Local Authority Attendance Team:

Referral criteria: 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-week rolling period

School will inform parents of the referral in writing using the LA template letter.

**If attendance improves, go back to Stage 1**

**If attendance drops, liaise with the Local Authority for next steps. Consider referrals to other services as appropriate.**

**Legal action is only ever considered as a last resort. We operate a "Support First" approach. If support is enough to ensure children access school as much as they can then legal sanctions won't be imposed. If support is not accepted and/or there is no satisfactory improvement then we have a legal duty to refer to the Local Authority who will decide what action will be taken.**