

## Too ill to attend school?

Children can attend school with minor ailments (headache, stomach ache, cold, sore throat) – over the counter medicines can be given before school. The school will contact you if they become too ill to remain in school.

If children are ill with diarrhea or vomiting, they should be stay off school for 48 hours after the last episode.

If you are unsure how long your child should be absent with an illness speak to the school, your doctor or your pharmacist for advice.



## Lateness

Good attendance doesn't just involve being present in school – it also involves punctuality.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Good time keeping is a vital life skill, which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The school day starts promptly for each Key Stage: 8:40 for Rec & KS1, 8:50 for KS2 and 9:00 for Nursery.

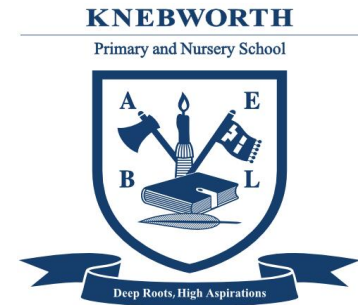
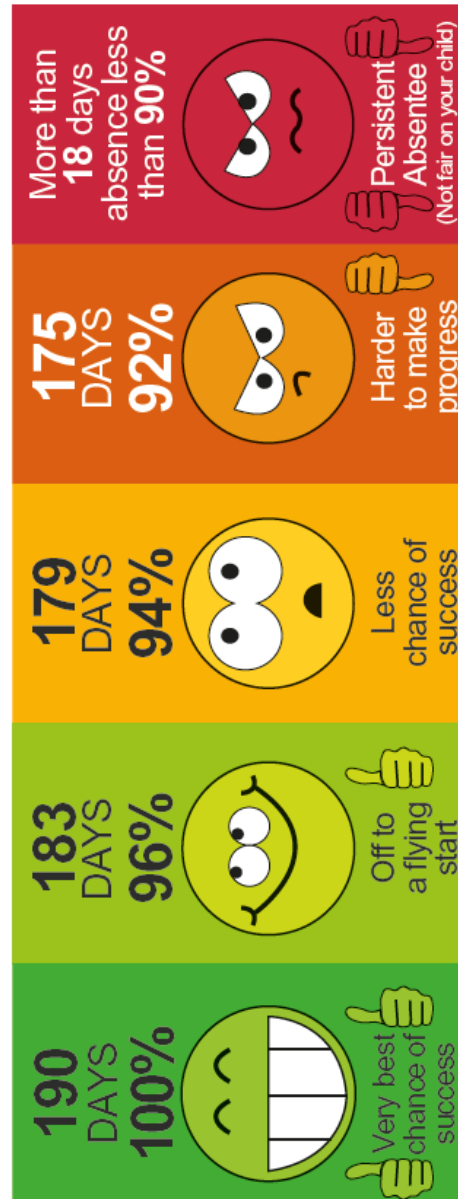
Children arriving after these times should enter the school via the office.

A pupil will be marked as late (L) when the teacher has completed the whole register and a pupil arrives after the register has been "sent" (electronically).

Pupils arriving after 9:10 will be marked as 'Late' (U) and this code counts as an unauthorised absence unless a valid reason is provided

Lates (U) will be counted as an unauthorised absence and all systems for monitoring absence/improving attendance will apply in these cases. This means that parents could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

There are **190** days in a school year which leaves **175** days to spend on family time, shopping, appointments and other things.



## School attendance: what parents need to know

At Knebworth School, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our children. Regular attendance at school is vital.

### Why is good attendance important?

There is a link between good school attendance and high level attainment.

Regardless of the reason, if your child is absent from school it will impact on their learning.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and develop social groups.
- Develop life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social events.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

### Support

If you are concerned about your child's attendance please speak to our Attendance Team for advice.

School office: 01438 812 184

[support@knebworth.herts.sch.uk](mailto:support@knebworth.herts.sch.uk)

## What does the law say?

It is a legal requirement that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this means regular attendance at school. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a **parental responsibility** and permitting absence from school without an exceptional reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Legal action can involve a penalty notice or being taken to court.**



### Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

Unless there are extenuating circumstances (as decided by the Head Teacher), as soon as 15 sessions of unauthorised absence have been reached in the current and previous term, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.



## Can my child ever be absent?

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. The decision to authorise or not authorise an absence lies solely with the Head Teacher.

The school cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- A child is ill or receiving medical attention (routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible)
- Days of religious observance, notified in advance
- Absence due to family circumstances



## What are unauthorised absences?

These are absences where:

No letter or acceptable explanation/evidence is provided by parent(s)/carers

The reason for the absence is not deemed by the school to fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

### Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates
- Oversleeping
- Arriving at school after the register has closed.
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation
- Day trips or family outings
- Problems with uniform/clothing
- Birthdays and holidays

## Holidays during term time

We do not authorise holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child.

The DfE guidelines clearly state that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** may a holiday be authorised during term time – this will be decided by the headteacher.

**Exceptional circumstances do not involve cheaper costs, family availability or weather conditions.**

You can be fined if you take your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher.



## Requesting absences

The authorisation of planned absences is at the discretion of the headteacher.

Leave of absence can be applied for in advance using the Absence Request Form at least four weeks in advance of the proposed date, explaining the circumstances. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)