

# Going to School: don't let your child miss out!

**Let's work together** to make sure your child doesn't miss out on school and gets the best start in life.

Children and young people can become **anxious** or **worried** about going to school. You might want to let them stay off school, but it does not help things to get better.

Why it is **important** for your child to go to school.

We know that children who go to school every day are more successful.

**Going to school helps them to:**

- ✓ Learn
- ✓ Have fun
- ✓ Make friends
- ✓ Get new experiences
- ✓ Get the qualifications that help them to get a job
- ✓ Increase their confidence

**and most of all...**

- ✓ Have the best start in life

**What can happen** if your child misses lots of school?

- X Find lessons difficult
- X Do less well in their exams
- X Be worried about going a school
- X Have lower self-esteem and fewer friends
- X More likely to get involved in crime or anti-social behaviour

It's **really important** to talk to your child's school if you child is worried about going in.

For more information on school absence in York visit:  
[www.york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance](http://www.york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance)



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## Is it ever okay for my child to be off school?

Sometimes children have to miss school if they are ill. You **must** let your school know if they are too sick to go in. Children might need to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time.

**You should always** try to make appointments such as dental check-ups during the school holidays or after school hours if you can.

Other reasons that your child might not be able to go to school could include the death of someone close to them, or taking part in an agreed religious activity. Your child's headteacher will decide whether to agree to them being out of school or not.

You **must** tell your child's school if they cannot go in, and why not.

If the school agrees that it is okay for them not to be at school, it is called an **'authorised absence'**. That means they **can** be off school.

## What does the law say?

**The law says** that all children of 'compulsory school age' (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education.

As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

If your child is registered at a school **you are responsible** for making sure he or she attends regularly.

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If your child is **anxious** or **worried** about going to school you can speak to other organisations that might be able to help you and your child:

CAMHS Single Point of Access  
tew.camhsspayselby@nhs.net  
01904 615345

CAMHS Crisis Line  
0800 0516171

Family Information Service  
yor-ok.org.uk

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
01904 551900  
mash@york.gov.uk

Special Educational Needs Independent Advice Service (SENDIAS)  
www.yorksendiass.org.uk  
01904 554319

York Mind  
www.yorkmind.org.uk  
01904 643363

The Island  
Enhancing children's quality of life through mentoring (theislandyork.org)  
01904 628449

York Travellers Trust  
http://ytt.org.uk  
01904 630526

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## What happens if your child **does not attend** school?

- 1** If your child does not go to school regularly - the school can request that City of York Council considers taking **legal action** against you.
- 2** If your school has not agreed that your child can be off school, it is called an **'unauthorised absence'**.
- 3** If your school is worried that your child is not coming to school regularly, they will get in touch with you. They will talk to you about what you and they can do to get your child to school every day.
- 4** They will review the impact of this contact four weeks later to see if your child has been at school as expected. If they are still not going to school every day, your school will set up an Attendance Panel with you to set a target for your child's attendance.
- 5** If they do not reach this target, the school can request that City of York Council issue you with a fine called a **Fixed Penalty Notice** of £60 that can rise to £120 if not paid.
- 6** **If this is not paid or attendance issues continue, you could have to go to Court** where a fine of up to £2,500 may be imposed and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.
- 7** The court can also impose other penalties, such as a **Parenting Order** or a **Community Order**.

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## How can you help?

- ✓ Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep
- ✓ Talk to your child about what they do at school and let them know when they've done well
- ✓ Speak to your child if they are missing school or seem unhappy
- ✓ Make sure your child is ready for school in time every morning
- ✓ Make sure your child attends and is on time every day for both the morning and afternoon registration
- ✓ Let your school know promptly if your child is ill and cannot go to school
- ✓ Ask in good time for any necessary Leaves of Absence so the school can consider if these can be authorised
- ✓ Book dentist's or doctor's appointments outside school time whenever you can
- ✓ Only take family holidays during the school holidays
- ✓ Go to parent evenings and events at your school
- ✓ Speak to your child's school if you're worried about any problems so you can work with them to make things better
- ✓ Work closely with the school and other agencies if attendance problems develop

## What if my child **has** to be off school?

- ✓ Make sure you let your school know about any time away from school well in advance, ideally **14 days** before.

**Remember** that if your school doesn't agree to your child's absence but you still take your child out of school, then they can ask for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by City of York.

- ✓ **Authorised absence may include:**
  - illness
  - medical appointments
  - days of religious observance
  - leave granted in exceptional circumstances

**Only the headteacher can authorise a child's absence from school.**



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