



Sir John Lawes School  
Education for a changing world

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

## Parent/Guardian Information Leaflet

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Part of the Sir John Lawes Academies Trust

## Information for Parents/Guardians

It is through good attendance that pupils maximise their full potential, enhancing their life chances for the future. Missing school means missing out on learning and this can have an impact on a child's development and attainment. There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attainment.

The law states that children of statutory school age who are on roll at a school or academy must attend regularly and punctually. Regular attendance is important because it is the best way of ensuring children make the most of the educational opportunities available to them.

### Attendance Matters

	= number of days absent	Approximate number of weeks	= number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	114 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	174 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	228 lessons

Parents/Guardians have a legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered is a criminal offence which carries a fine of up to £1000 per parent per child (Section 444(1)) or in more serious cases (aggravated offence), a fine of up to £2500 per parent per child and/or up to 3 months imprisonment (Section 444 (1A)).

## Penalty Notice Process

Sir John Lawes operates the Penalty Notice process for 15 or more unauthorised sessions of absence in the current or previous term. On the 1st of February 2016 Hertfordshire County Council changed the Penalty Notice from 21 to 15 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current or previous term. Please note a session is half a day of unauthorised absence. The Penalty Notice requires you to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days (e.g., two parents with two children could incur a total cost of £480). If Parents/Guardians do not pay the fine you will be liable for prosecution for this offence. Penalty Notices are administered by the Local Authority and they have the responsibility for issuing them to parents and guardians.

### Requests for absences during term time

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a parent/guardian you are strongly urged to avoid booking holidays during term time.

If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and this may lead to a Penalty Notice. By taking family holidays during the designated holiday periods, you will be supporting your child's full school attendance, learning and development. There are 13 weeks of the year to take holidays out of term time.

## Maximising School Attendance

- Children need to go to school regularly and punctually to make the most of their educational opportunities and parents/guardians have a vital role in making that happen.
- Our attendance target is 96% and above.
- If you are having trouble getting your child to go to school please contact us. We will discuss the attendance issues with you and work together to put a plan in place.
- School offers meetings and phone calls to discuss attendance issues.
- Develop consistent evening and morning routines with your child.
- Regularly talk to your child about their school day.
- Please try to book medical appointments after school and book holidays out of term time.
- Please call the absence line if your child is unwell and unable to attend school.
- Pupils need to arrive at school on time – the school day starts at 8.40am.

### Attendance Matters

The link between attendance and attainment is well proven. It is through good attendance that children maximise their full potential and make the most of the opportunities that school has to offer.



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