

What are my duties as a parent/carer?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a suitable full-time education. Parents/carers have a duty, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receives an efficient full-time education either by attendance at school or otherwise, and so share in the responsibility of ensuring good and regular attendance. It is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure their child receives that education by full-time attendance at school or otherwise.

This means that parents must ensure that:

Their child receives an education either by attendance at a school, or by education otherwise than at a school for example elective home education.

Their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parents are expected to:

Ensure their child attends every day that the school is open

Notify the school as soon as possible when their child will be unexpectedly absent

Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.

Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Good attendance is linked with improved achievement at school, the more a child is in school the more progress they will make.

The DfE have worked with the Attendance Action Alliance to provide guidance for parents on school attendance [Resources for families | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resources-for-families/)

As absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions are made on an individual case by case basis.