

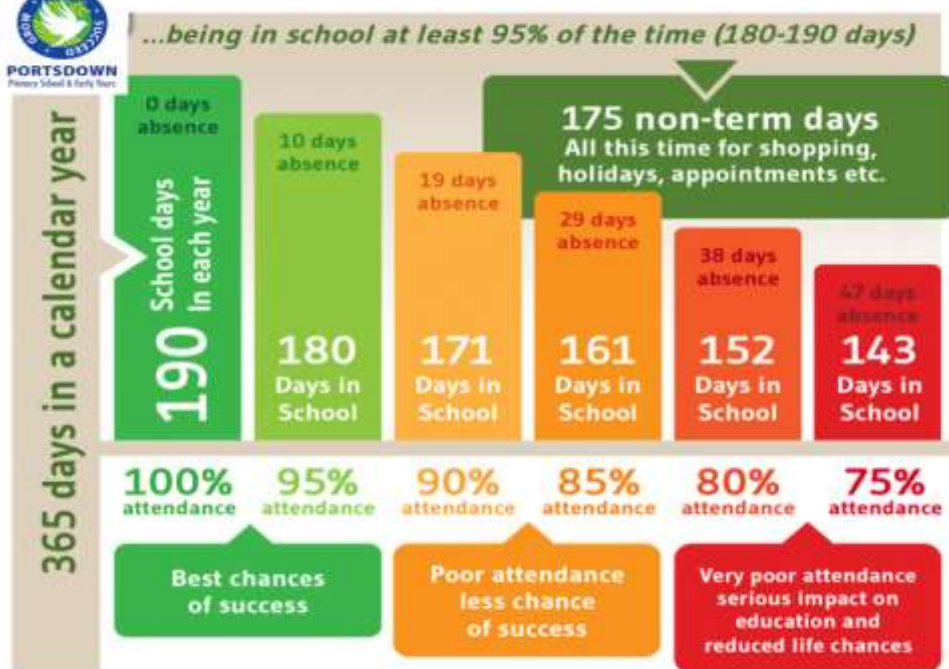


PORTSDOWN
Primary School & Early Years

Portsmouth Primary School Attendance Information for parents and carers updated September 2024.



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Primary School & Early Years



DID YOU KNOW? A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.7%

Start and End Times

School starts at 8.45am.



This means that children will need to arrive at school ready to enter their class at 8.45am.



School finishes at 3.15pm.

What you need to know...

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance (96%+) at school perform better than those who don't.

How to let us know your child will be absent.

The quickest way is to let us know through the Studybugs App which can be downloaded from their website: <https://studybugs.com/about/parents> (Remember to leave your notifications setting as 'on')

Studybugs will also provide you with the latest NHS information to support you in looking after your child.

You can also contact us by telephoning us on 02392 378991



If your child is absent and we don't have a reason

We will try to ring you and send you a message via Studybugs. If you haven't downloaded the app, the message will go to the email we have on our system.

If we do not have a valid reason, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Children arriving late to school

Our school start time is 8.45am. This means that children should be at school to enter their classroom door at 8.45am.

All children and their parents/carers will be asked for a **reason for their lateness** which will be recorded.

If a child arrives after the register has 'closed' then they will get a U code and will count as one session of unauthorised absence even though they are in school.

Where to find important information

The NHS has a really good guide. It can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Portsmouth guidance can be found here:

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/schools/school-attendance/>

What if my child needs to miss school?

There are only a few reasons why your child may miss school – see the section below.

If you are applying for an exceptional reason, a LOAF (Leave of Absence Form) **must** be completed **before** the absence starts. LOAF are available from the front office.

What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend.
- You have **asked in advance and been given permission** by the school for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because it is a day set aside for religious observance.
- The local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it's not available or has not been provided yet.

Letters

Following Portsmouth guidelines, we have a number of letters that we may send out to you about your child's attendance.

- **Med 1 Letter** – Where a child has had 8 sessions (4 days) of absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks. This letter is to say that if we get to 7 days we will need medical evidence to support medical absences
- **Med 2 Letter** – This letter informs you that your child has had 14 sessions (7 days) of absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks and we now require medical evidence
- **Unauthorised absence letters** – Remember, *any absence without a valid reason will be recorded as unauthorised*
- **Reply to request for leave of absence** – for example response to holiday requests
- **Letter to inform you that a Fixed Penalty Notice has been requested (Fine)**
- **Invitation to meet with school to discuss how we can work together to support you in improving your child's attendance**

What is an exceptional circumstance?

It is the decision of the Headteacher as to what might constitute exceptional circumstances and each request for term time leave will be considered on an individual basis, including looking at your child's current and previous year's attendance record and requests.

Exceptional leave is **NOT**:

Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays

Availability of desired accommodation

Parent/carer work commitments

Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods

Travelling in quieter periods because your child has a special educational need

Any overlap with the beginning or end of term, half term.

Exceptional leave **MAY** be:

Grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and you must leave in an emergency

Significant trauma in the family recently and time away from school will benefit the child – this must be backed up by a doctor's letter

A one-off, never to be repeated occasion, that can only happen at that time, e.g. family wedding/funeral.

Exceptional leave will only be granted for the minimum number of sessions

Medical Evidence

When a child reaches 14 sessions of absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks, the Local Authority recommend that school ask you to provide medical evidence to support future medical absences. Medical evidence may be in the form of an appointment card, note from the medical practitioner's reception, copy of a prescription, copy of any medication given.

Please note that we do not require a medical certificate. If you do not provide medical evidence, the absences will remain unauthorised in the register.

Before we ask you for medical evidence, we will write to you to explain that your child is nearing the threshold for such evidence.

Repeated diarrhoea and/or sickness

We understand that children can suffer from all sorts of illnesses. If a child has **repeated** episodes of diarrhoea and/or sickness, we would expect you to consult the GP or see our School Nurse. Repeated episodes are not nice for you or your child so finding the root cause is really important. You will need to provide us with evidence of your appointment with the health professionals for us to continue to authorise absence for repeated diarrhoea and/or sickness.

Formal notifications and Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines)

When are they used?

There are two types of Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines).

1. When a pupil has at least 5 school days (10 sessions) recorded as an **unauthorised absence** in a rolling period of ten school weeks. Failure to provide medical evidence may result in unauthorised absence. These days do not have to be all in one go as they can build up over the rolling ten school weeks.
2. When a child has 5 days or more of **unauthorised holiday**.

Please note **ONLY** a Headteacher can authorise an absence from school. The school does not get any money from any Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions.

Is a warning given?

Not in cases where a leave of absence in term time has been taken without school permission. For example, if an unauthorised holiday is taken for 5 days or more a Penalty Notice will be issued by Portsmouth LA to all parents / carers.

In all other cases a Penalty Notice warning is sent to parents and carers by Portsmouth LA. The warning will give 30 school days in which to improve their child's attendance. The Penalty Notice will not be issued if the child has no unauthorised absences from school over the warning period.

Who is responsible and what is the fine?

Each parent/carer is individually responsible for the child's attendance and commits a separate offence if the child does not attend school on a regular basis.

The following people are classed as parents and can be fined:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

Can parents/carers appeal?

No. There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued. However, if they believe that it's issue was procedurally incorrect then they can contact the Local Authority with the relevant information.

Can parents and carers receive more than one Penalty Notice?

Yes. If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the

national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Portsmouth Local Authority considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used where unauthorised absence occurs.

How can we help?

If you think you may struggle to get your child to school every day, come and speak to us so we can support you put a plan in place. You can also speak to your child's class teacher to pass on any information.

The school has a full time attendance officer who will be your first port of call for all attendance information and support. This includes helping you make an appointment with our school nurse.

If you need specific family support, you can speak to our Family Link Worker. As always, senior teachers are around to talk to as well.

School details

Portsdown Primary School, Sundridge Close, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 3JL
Telephone number 02392 378991 Website: www.portsdownprimary.co.uk