

# 10 things you should know about School attendance



Northumberland Education Welfare Service is part of the Virtual School in the Education & Skills Service.

1

Education Welfare work to ensure that the local authority's statutory duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children in relation to school attendance, elective home education, children missing education, child employment and performance licensing are carried out to the highest possible standard.

2

Education Welfare promote and enforce regular attendance at school for all children in Northumberland in order for them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. They work in partnership with agencies across Northumberland.

3

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school, alternative educational provision or otherwise. If a child is registered at a school, parents/carers have primary responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

# 4

A child becomes of compulsory school age when they reach the age of five. Where a parent has elected to register their child at school, they must start school in the term following their fifth birthday (although parents of many children choose to send them earlier). A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach the age of 16.

# 5

If a parent/carer fails to meet their legal responsibility in ensuring their child receives a suitable education either by regular attendance at school, alternative provision or otherwise, legal action may be considered. These include Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Attendance Orders or Prosecution.

# 6

It is the Head teacher who determines whether or not an absence is authorised. Unauthorised absence is where the school has either not received a reason for absence, or the reason given is unacceptable.

# 7

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on leave during term time. There has to be exceptional circumstances in requesting leave and these circumstances will be determined by your child's school. Parents can be issued with a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.

# 8

When considering Prosecution the local authority must be fair, independent and objective and not let any personal views or any witness influence decisions or be affected by improper or undue pressure from any source.

# 9

The Education Welfare and the local authority must always act in the interests of justice and not solely for the purpose of obtaining a conviction.

# 10

We are always happy to discuss any queries you may have.  
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