

## Success starts with excellent school attendance

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can support this aim and prepare your child for success both in school and in life. When you make school attendance a priority you help your child get better outcomes and develop healthy life habits.

The Welsh Government and Carmarthenshire expects all pupils to attend school at least 95% of the time. When children and young people are absent from school it can impact on their outcomes. If children are not in school the likelihood is that they are not learning. In addition pupils who attend school regularly feel more connected to their community, develop important social skills and friendships, and are significantly more likely to leave school with good outcomes, setting them up for a strong future.

Regular school attendance is vital and missing school can have a significant impact on achievement over a one year period as illustrated below:

<b>95-100% attendance</b>	<b>Best chance of success</b>	<i>Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity.</i>
<b>90-95% attendance</b>	<b>At least 2 weeks of learning missed</b>	<i>Satisfactory. Your child may have to spend time catching up with work.</i>
<b>85-90% attendance</b>	<b>At least 4 weeks of learning missed</b>	<i>Your child may be at risk of underachieving and may need extra support from you to catch up with work.</i>
<b>80-85% attendance</b>	<b>At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed</b>	<i>Your child's poor attendance has a significant impact on learning.</i>
<b>Below 80% attendance</b>	<b>At least 7½ weeks of learning missed</b>	<i>Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.</i>

The importance of school attendance therefore cannot be understated. Attending school regularly supports lasting friendships, the development of important social skills and access to opportunities, choices and experiences.

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*Mae Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg Carmarthenshire County Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English*

It is the responsibility of you as parent/carer to ensure that your child attend school. As a parent/carer you can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of your child at school taking the following actions:

- Start good habits early, arrive at school on time and keep to school rules
- Inform the school on the first day of any illness or absence, providing medical evidence where appropriate
- Make it known that you do not approve of poor attendance, lateness or truancy.
- Ensure your child only miss school for legally allowed reasons such as illness or days specifically set aside for religious observance.
- Always send in notes to explain an absence.
- Avoid booking family holidays during term time.
- Attend parents' evenings and other school events.
- Read all letters that your child brings home from school.
- Talk to the school about any problems or difficulties you may be experiencing.
- Support school in encouraging good behaviour.
- Take an interest in your child's schoolwork and homework.

In order to support regular school attendance we have advised Headteachers not to authorise routine appointments taken during term time. We have also asked them to consider every request for holiday during time robustly and consistently. Therefore, I would like your cooperation to ensure that you support your child's attendance at school and **do not** arrange family holidays or routine appointments during term times.

If you insist in taking your child out of school for non-authorised activities the local authority is obliged to consider legal measures under the Education Act 1996 and you may be subject to a fine or prosecution. We do not want to have to resort to taking enforcement action in this matter but we have a responsibility to children and young people that we must uphold if the need arises. I very much hope that this can be avoided by us working together in the interests of our children.

We at Carmarthenshire County Council, in partnership with our schools, are fully committed to ensuring that every child receives the best possible education and is supported to achieve their full potential.

I very much hope that this can be achieved by us working together in the interests of our children.

Yours sincerely,



E.D. Gareth Morgans  
Director of Education and Children's Services