

# Hatherley Infant School



## Attendance Policy

We want to ensure your needs are met. If you would like this document in any other format, please contact us:

[admin@hatherley-inf.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hatherley-inf.gloucs.sch.uk)

Agreed: September 2018

Review Date: September 2020

## **Introduction and Statutory framework**

The law requires that pupils are in school every day unless one of the statutory reasons for them to be absent apply. These statutory reasons are:

For any case brought before the magistrates under section 444 there are only these possible defences:

### **The child had leave of absence.**

This means that your child had the Head teacher's permission to be absent. You could prove this by producing a letter from the Head teacher.

### **The child was too sick.**

Sickness means that your child was not fit for school on the dates listed on your summons. You could prove this by producing a medical certificate or letter from your child's doctor or consultant.

### **The child was unavoidably absent.**

This means that there were exceptional circumstances preventing your child from attending school during all of the dates listed on the summons. This may be difficult to prove.

### **The child was absent for any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs.**

This means that your child was absent because of your religious observance—not your child's. You could prove this with a letter from your minister of religion. It is unlikely that this defence would apply to all the dates on your summons.

### **The school is not within "walking distance" of the child's home and no suitable alternative arrangements have been made by the LA.**

For a child under 8 years old this distance is 2 miles. For a child of 8 years old and over this distance is 3 miles. This means that where the Local Authority has an obligation to provide transport it has not done so. You could prove this with copies of your correspondence with the Local Authority. You should seek legal advice if you plan to use this as a defence.

### **The child has no fixed abode (no permanent address) and the parent can prove that they were travelling for the purposes of obtaining work.**

This means that you are a Traveller and that on the dates listed on your summons you were travelling to seek work or were working.

You could prove this with a witness who could explain to the court that this is what you were doing.

### **At Hatherley Infant School, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life opportunities and chances for children.**

#### **Because of this we:**

Ensure good attendance and punctuality is promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.

Encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.

Promote a home / school partnership built on communication and trust.

Strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children.

## **How do we all achieve this? Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality**

### **Head Teacher:**

To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.

To deal with parental requests for leave in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.

To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.

Write and share individual Attendance improvement plans at Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) where attendance is below 90%

### **School Administrator/Attendance Officer:**

To implement the daily checking of electronic registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.

To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.

To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.

To promptly inform the Family Support Worker, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality

To monitor weekly attendance data for registration groups.

To produce data for SLT/Attendance Team to analyse.

To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Education Inclusion Service (EIS)

To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality

To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils in liaison with the Family Support Worker.

To support SLT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.

Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy.

### **Staff:**

To complete the daily class attendance register with the pupils' twice a day; at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm.

To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.

Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.

If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.

Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.

To promptly inform the FSW, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.

To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings and during Structured Conversations.

**The Local Authority, through the Education Inclusion Service (EIS), is expected to:**

Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.

Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.

Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.

Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

Support the school in issuing penalty notices should this be appropriate.

**Parents:**

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education. You are responsible for making sure that your child attends school.

There may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. This is to be expected and for the odd day off sick you should follow the school's procedures for notifying illness.

**The process for reporting your child's absence to the school is:**

- Phone call to the school office 01452 522027
- Letter to be brought into the office on return to school – this should contain a specific reason for absence

Children may also have to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time. However, you should try to make routine appointments such as dental check-ups during the school holidays or after school hours.

Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences can only be authorised by the school.

**Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury.** If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them.

**Parents will:**

Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons e.g. PE kit, reading book bag and reading book.

Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.

Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.

Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

**There are two types of absence codes:**

*Authorised or Unauthorised absences*

## Authorised or Unauthorised absences

Legitimate reasons for absence, including the following, may be authorised:

**Sickness:** The Headteacher may authorise a child's absence for illness, but may question too many absence days if your child or children are frequently absent for illness. If your child or children are absent for the reoccurrence of the same illness then school would want to work with you as a family to see if further support and advice can be offered through the School Nurse to enable the ongoing illness to be supported within school.

**Medical or dental appointments:** Where ever possible these should be arranged outside of school hours.

**Days of religious observance**

**Exceptional family circumstances:** e.g. bereavement

**The following absences will not be authorised:**

- Looking after the house
- Looking after brothers and sisters or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Translating
- Family Holidays or days out

In addition the following absence will not be authorised:

- Absence for Y2 children during May when Statutory Tests are completed
- Absence during Phonics Screening Check week in June for all Y1 pupils and some Y2 pupils who did not meet the threshold in Year 1.

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 **no child may take holidays during term time**, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances.

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be expected to be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. This could result in a fine to both parents/carers of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. If the fine is not paid the Local Authority would then proceed to court for the criminal offence of non-school attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

*A Warning Letter will be issued to the parent/s carer/s that have day –to- day care and responsibility to inform them that: **Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.***

## Exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances are:

- Children whose parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- Children, whose parents/carers are dictated by their employer as to when they can take holiday's e.g police, fire service or working for a company that closes between certain dates. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer as to why the family can only take a holiday during said dates term time)
- A child with a parent/carer or sibling who has a life threatening illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members)

## Persistent Absence

Pupils who are Persistently Absent from School for whatever reason will be monitored on a week by week basis. (These pupils are known as Persistently Absent pupils)

What is a Persistently Absent Pupil?

This is someone who has 90% attendance or lower at any given time during the academic year.

*At the end of term 1 = at least 07 sessions absence.*

*At the end of term 2 = at least 14 sessions absence.*

*At the end of term 3 = at least 20 sessions absence.*

*At the end of term 4 = at least 25 sessions absence.*

*At the end of term 5 = at least 31 sessions absence.*

*At the end of term 6 = at least 38 sessions absence*

These pupils will be automatically made known to the School Attendance and Pastoral Team.

### **Governors will:**

- Monitor and evaluate attendance data
- Ensure that the policy is implemented
- Agree school attendance targets
- Ensure attendance data is reported as required to either the Local Authority or DfE as requested in a timely manner.

### **Attendance and Pastoral Team will:**

- Work together to maintain a high level of attendance
- Meet on a regular basis to look at and evaluate attendance data.
- Meet with pupils in school and their families as appropriate
- Inform parents who have been referred in writing what the next steps will be.
- Hold formal meetings with parents/carers and pupils whose attendance continues to cause concern. These meetings may result in an Attendance Improvement Plan being put into place.
- Carry out a home visit to families or children who have failed to attend an Attendance Improvement meeting and who are at risk of a referral to the Local Authority.
- Manage the start of the legal process of parents/carers for poor school attendance when appropriate by referring to the Local Authority.

## 'Children Missing from Education'

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

The Out of School Report (Ofsted 2004) estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing from Education (CME) in the UK. For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from Education is defined as: "Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for 20 school days.

*All staff involved with attendance will take into account the time of Year and the pupils' individual circumstances. For example, a letter would not be sent regarding a pupil who has a long term illness and contact has already been made with the family.*

## **Procedures for Promoting Attendance**

Teacher and School Attendance Officer to monitor punctuality and attendance daily and maintain accurate records.



Attendance and Pastoral Team to meet on a termly basis to evaluate attendance data



If attendance drops to 93% the school based Family Support Worker/School Attendance Officer will contact parents/guardians to voice a cause for concern and encourage them to get their child/ren to school and/or on time;



If attendance does not show improvement after three weeks the school based Family Support Worker will contact parents to organise a meeting to discuss support they may need



After two weeks if no improvement is evident the Head teacher will contact the parent/guardian via letter or phone to request improvement in attendance.



If no improvement after a further two weeks, Headteacher /Pastoral and Attendance Team to invite parents/carers into school for a meeting where an Individual Attendance Plan will be put in place.



If no improvement or attendance drops to 87% then EWT will complete a home visit if parent/s carer/s fail to engage or if this is the second referral within a two month period it may go straight to a Warning Letter and an **Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM)**

## **Attendance Improvement Meeting**

An Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) is set up to allow parents/carers and pupils an opportunity to show an improvement in their attendance percentage over a set number of weeks.

Initial meeting set up with the Attendance and Pastoral Team/ member off SLT/parents/carers and any other relevant agency.

During the meeting a target is set for the pupil's attendance and the number of weeks it will be monitored over (usually 4 – 6 weeks)



Review meeting



Possible extension if close to target



Second review meeting



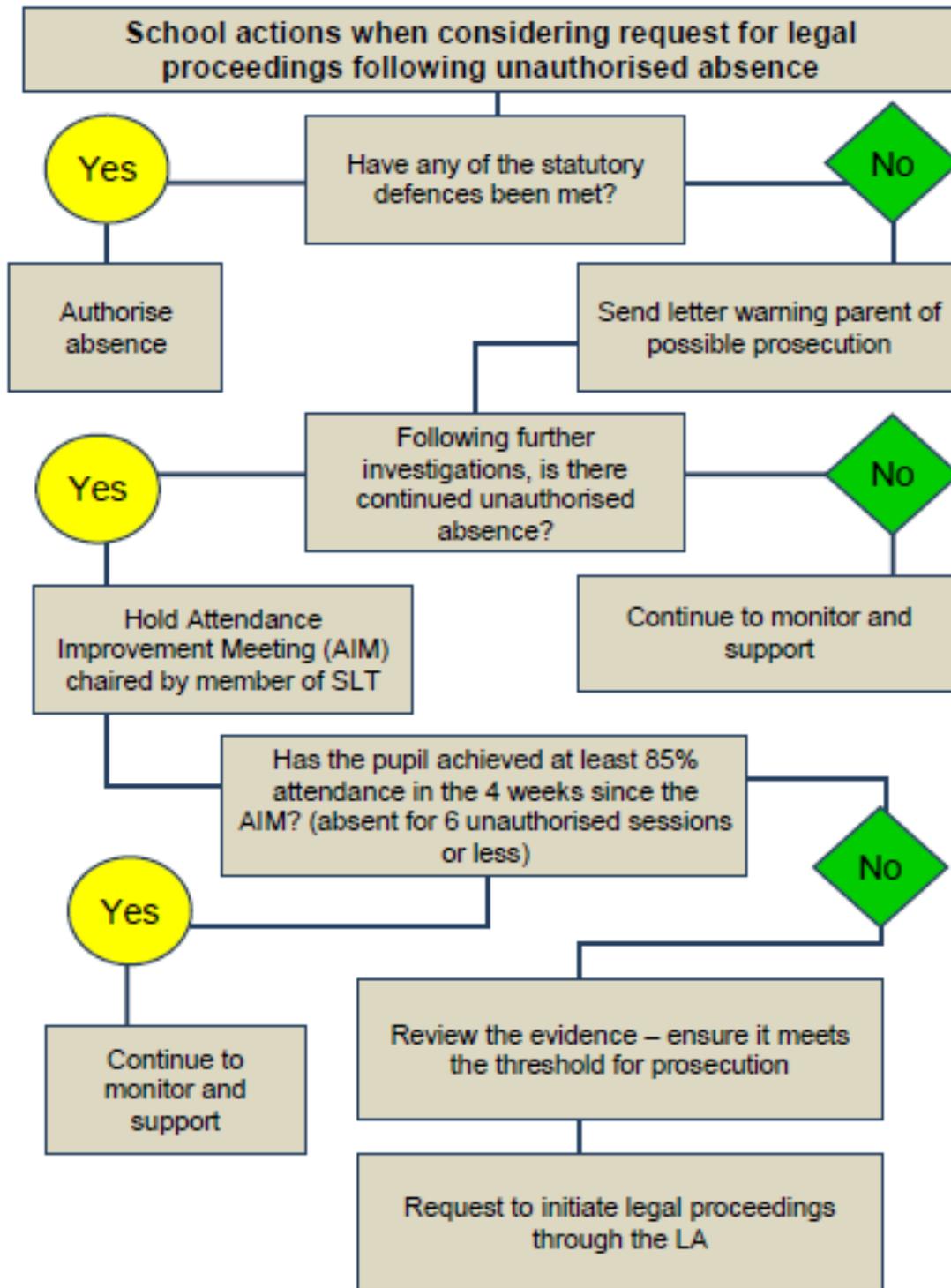
Targets met case closed



Targets not met plan **Failed**



Case referred to the Education Entitlement & Inclusion Team who will see the legal process through to Pre court meeting, to determine how to proceed and dispose of the offence



## **The Statutory Defences**

### **Education Act 1996**

S444

(3) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of his/her absence from the school—

(a) with leave,

(b) at any time when s/he was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, or

(c) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs.

(4) The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves—

(a) that the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and

(b) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for any of the following—

(i) his transport to and from the school,

(ii) boarding accommodation for him/her at or near the school, or

(iii) enabling him/her to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.

(5) In subsection (4) —walking distance—

(a) in relation to a child who is under the age of eight, means 3.218688 kilometres (two miles), and

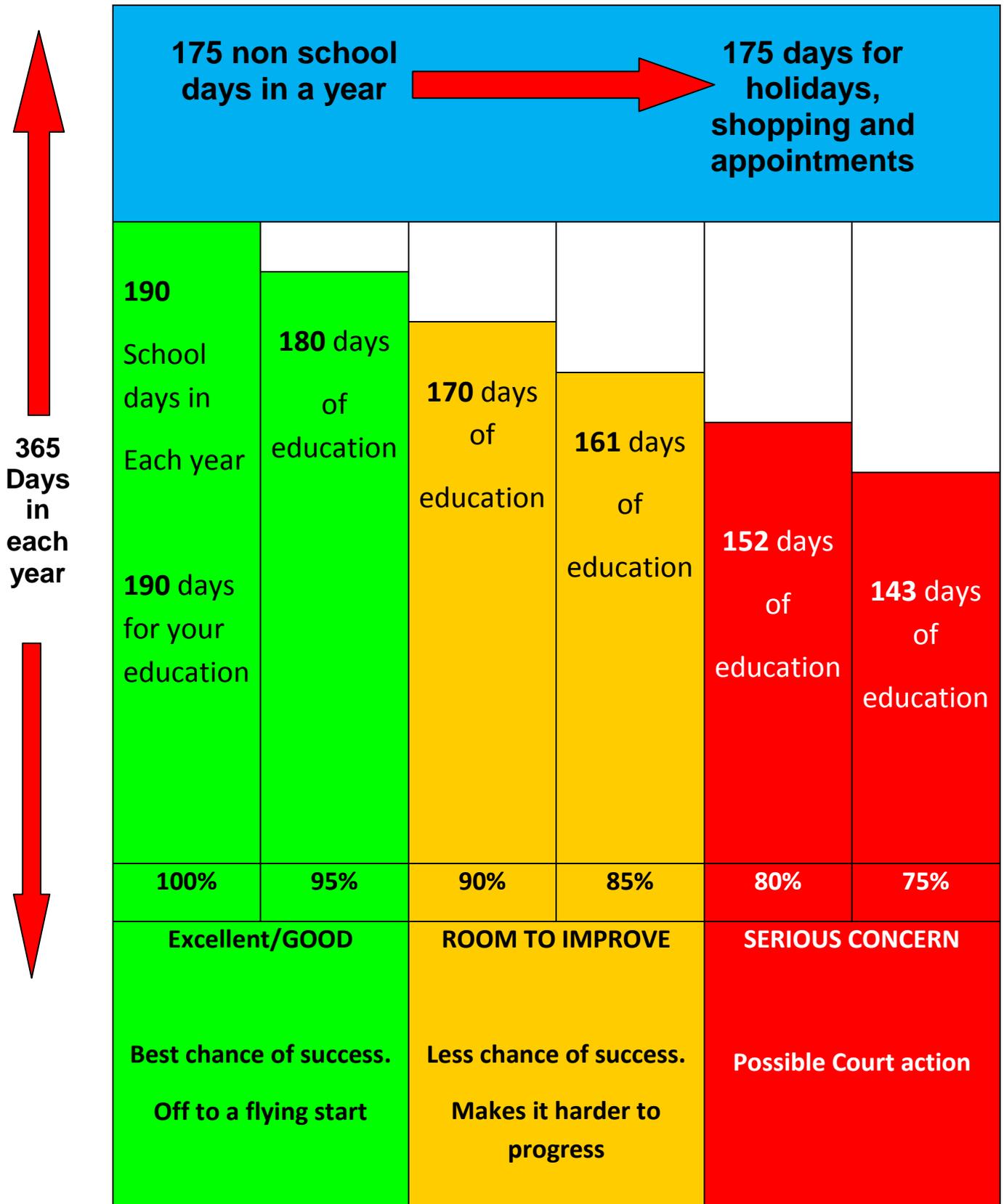
(b) in relation to a child who has attained the age of eight, means 4.828032 kilometres (three miles), in each case measured by the nearest available route.

(6) If it is proved that the child has no fixed abode, subsection (4) shall not apply, but the parent shall be acquitted if he proves—

(a) that he is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,

(b) that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and

(c) if the child has attained the age of six, that s/he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.



# Good time keeping means...

...making sure your child is at school and ready to learn, before the school bell rings!

**Did you know?** - being 15 minutes **late** each day is the same as missing **two weeks** of school!\*



**Lost minutes =  
Lost learning!**



## Every Schoolday Counts

but every **minute** is equally important!

\* Over one full academic year

# Good time keeping means...

...making sure your child is at school and ready to learn, before the school bell rings!

**Did you know?** - being 15 minutes **late** each day is the same as missing **two weeks** of school!\*



**Lost minutes =  
Lost learning!**



## Every Schoolday Counts

but every **minute** is equally important!

\* Over one full academic year

# Every school day counts

365 days in a year

190 days in school each year -  
this leaves **175** days for holidays,  
shopping, and appointments

# Days off from School add up to lost learning!

## Why was your child absent?

Had to get hair cut

It was my birthday

Had to take the dog to the vets

Had to look after a relative

Uniform wasn't clean

Had to wait for the gasman



Couldn't get up, had a late night

Alarm didn't go off

Went Shopping

**These absences would NOT be authorised**