The headteacher will decide the amount of time a pupil can be away from school, considering their attendance record.

Requests **will not** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before or during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence for any reason
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent, for any reason

Lateness and truancy

Good attendance doesn't just involve being present in school – it also involves punctuality. You also have a responsibility to ensure that your child arrives to school on time and stays in school during the day.

All pupils are expected to be in their classrooms at 8.55 am every day. If pupils are not in their classrooms by 9:20am, they receive a late mark – this is an **unauthorised absence**.

If the school believes a pupil is truanting, immediate action will be taken – this can escalate to penalty notices.

How can I help?

You can help in the following ways:

- Encourage good attendance by making sure your child goes to school regularly
- Take an interest in your child's school work
- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of absence from school
- Support our school in our efforts to control inappropriate behaviour
- Inform us on the first day of your child's absence, and keep us updated throughout the absence period
- Provide us with more than one emergency contact for your child, to ensure that if we receive no response from one number, we can try the others that you have provided
- Cooperate with our school to make sure your child overcomes any attendance problems
- Discuss planned absences with the headteacher and apply for permission well in advance
- Only take your child out of school during term time where the absence has been **authorised**

Don't underestimate the importance of 100 percent attendance. Even one day missed can have an effect on learning:

- **98** percent attendance means **four** school days missed
- **95** percent attendance means **10** school days missed
- **90** percent attendance means **19** school days missed
- **80** percent attendance means **38** school days missed
- **Five minutes** late each day means **three** school days missed

If you'd like further information regarding attendance at our school, please see our **Attendance Policy** – downloadable from the school's website.

Four Acres Academy

School attendance: what parents need to know

Every day COUNTS!

Why is good attendance important?

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school, and to establish positive life habits that are necessary for future success.

Through regular attendance, pupils can:

- Build friendships and develop social groups.
- Develop life skills.
- Engage in essential learning and other school social events.
- Achieve to their full potential.
- Minimise the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims or perpetrators of crime.

All parents should promote good attendance and work in partnership with their child's school to provide a cohesive approach.

What does the law say?

All children of compulsory school age – between 5-16 – must receive a suitable full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making appropriate alternative arrangements.

Once you have registered your child at a school, you are also legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. If you fail to do this – even if your child misses school without you knowing – legal action can be taken against you by the LA. It is a legal offence to fail to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Legal action can involve a penalty notice or being taken to court.

Parents also face the risk of imprisonment and parenting orders. Parenting orders involve attending a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

A penalty notice of £60 may be issued as an alternative to prosecution, but this will rise to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice will usually lead to **prosecution**.

Can my child ever be absent?

When a pupil is absent from school, this will be classified as either **'authorised'** or **'unauthorised'**.

The governing board and headteacher decide which absences are granted as authorised. Authorised absences are only permitted for valid reasons such as:

- Illness.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.

Wherever possible, parents should always try to arrange medical and dental appointments during school holidays or after school hours.

What are unauthorised absences?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential or reasonable.

Unauthorised absences can include:

- Forgetting school term dates.
- Oversleeping.
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Arriving at school after the register has closed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Keeping pupils off school unnecessarily or without explanation.
- Day trips or family outings.
- Problems with uniform/clothing.
- Birthdays and holidays.

Holidays during term time

The school **cannot** be expected to authorise an absence for a holiday during term time.

Taking holidays during term time means that pupils miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for pupils to catch up on work when they return to school. Only in **exceptional circumstances** may a holiday be authorised during term time – this will be decided by the headteacher.

Exceptional circumstances do not involve cheaper costs, family availability or weather conditions.

You can be fined if you take your child on holiday during term time without permission from the headteacher.

Requesting absences

The authorisation of planned absences is at the discretion of the headteacher.

All absences, including for holidays, must be requested as far in advance as possible – the minimum notice period is 20 days. If you think your child needs to be taken out of school, you should discuss the reasons with the headteacher as soon as possible.

If the headteacher is satisfied with the evidence and the notice period, they will authorise the absence.