

THE COTTESLOE SCHOOL

Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers 2026



PREPARE



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Attendance Matters

The Cottesloe School is proud to be recognised as an Inclusive Attendance school. Our approach is rooted in child-centric, evidence-informed practices and a shared commitment to fostering exceptional attendance. We believe that supporting every student's presence is a collective responsibility, driven by a clear understanding of our individual roles.

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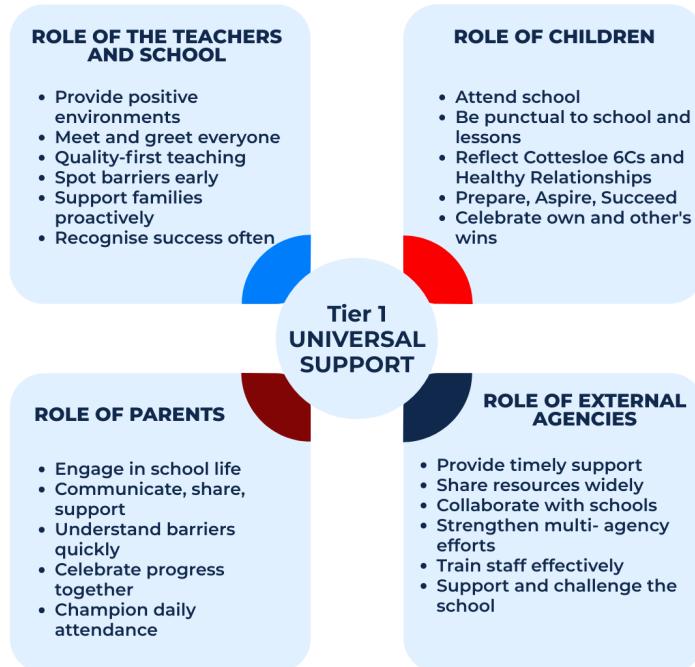
Multi-Tiered System of Support

At The Cottesloe School, we believe that every day counts. To ensure every student has the support they need to attend and thrive, we use a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**.

This approach focuses on three tiers of care, ensuring that we provide the right help at the right time. Attendance is a true team effort; it involves students, parents, teachers, and external specialists all working in harmony. By using clear data to guide our decisions and following the Department for Education's *"Working Together to Improve School Attendance"* guidelines, we ensure our support is consistent, fair, and effective for every family.

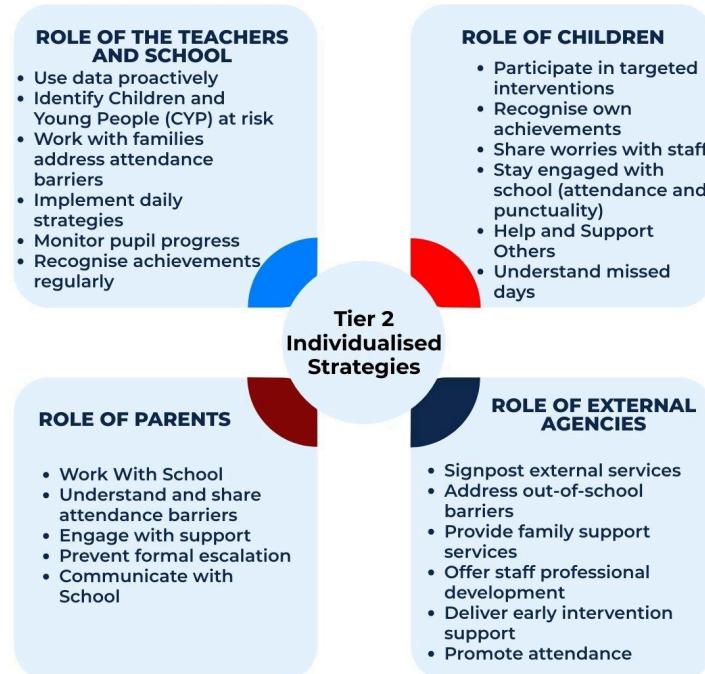
Tier 1 - Universal Approach:

Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



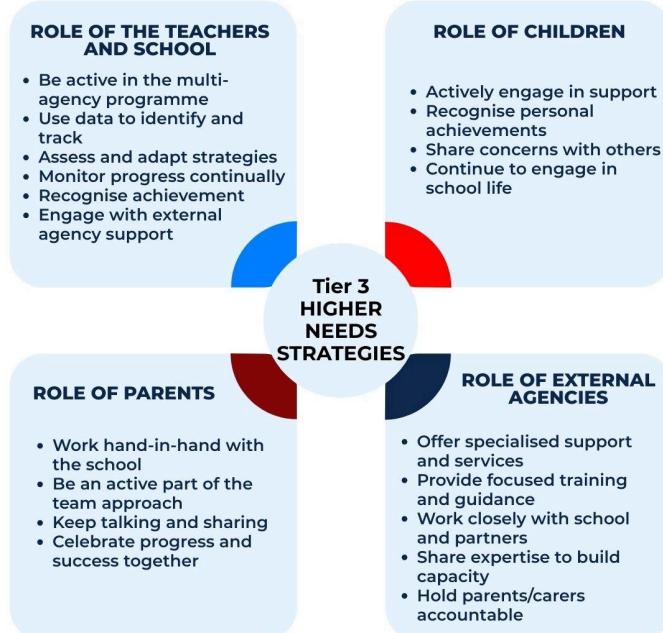
Tier 2 - Individualised Strategies and Early Help Support:

Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help and support for persistent attendance challenges.



Tier 3 - Higher Needs Strategies Support: Significant attendance concerns.

Giving specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including access to external agency support when necessary.



At The Cottesloe School, we believe that transparency is the key to a successful partnership between school and home. To ensure every student receives the exact level of support they need, our attendance framework is organized into specific "Tiered Pathways."

Understanding the Tiers

- **Tier 1:** Universal support and celebration of good attendance for all students.
- **Tier 2 (a, b, and c):** We have specifically divided our Targeted Support into three sub-sections. This allows us to be incredibly precise, ensuring we provide the right intervention for a student's specific circumstances, whether that is a brief period of illness or a more complex barrier to attending school.
- **Tier 3:** Intensive, assisted pathways involving close collaboration between staff, parents, and often external agencies.

By using these clear pathways, parents and carers know exactly where their child sits within our framework and what support is available to them.

Counting the Days, Not the Percentages

At The Cottesloe School, we prefer to talk about **days off**, rather than percentages. While "90%" sounds like a fantastic score on a test, in the context of school attendance, it tells a different story.

A student with 90% attendance is classified as "**Persistently Absent**." They will have missed 100 hours of learning, making it significantly harder for a child to keep up with their peers and feel confident in the classroom.

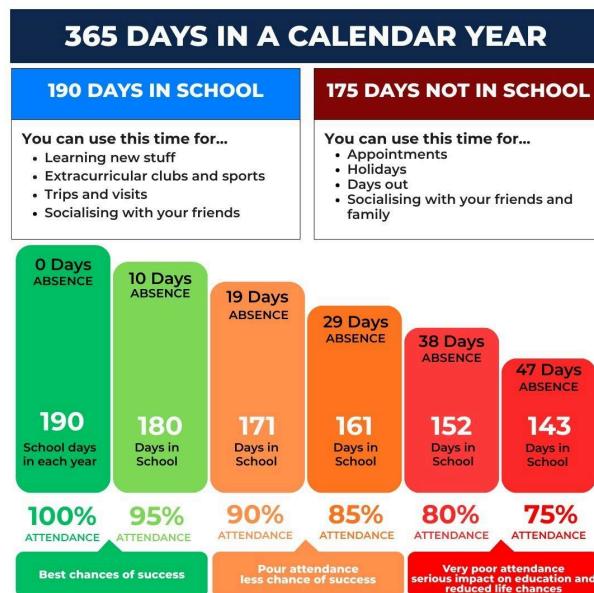
Why Every Moment Counts

Fact: Being in school is the single most important factor in your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development.

For the vast majority of students, the best place to be during term-time is in school, with their friends and supported by our staff.

Did you know? Your child is only required to be at school for **190 days a year**. That is **52% of the calendar year**. The remaining 48% of the year (weekends and school holidays) provides plenty of time for appointments, holidays, and quality time together.

We are here to support you in making sure those 190 days count.



The Link Between Attendance and Achievement

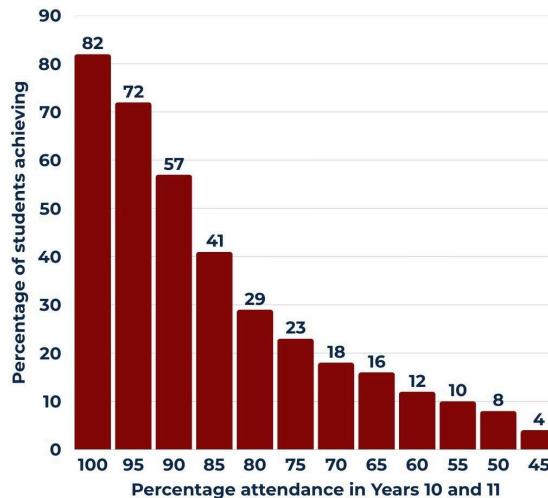
How does attendance affect grades? The research is clear: students with the highest attendance throughout their time at school consistently achieve the best GCSE and A-Level results. While an attendance figure of 90% might sound acceptable, it has a measurable impact on a student's future opportunities.

Research shows the dramatic difference that just a 10% drop in attendance can make on a child's chance of achieving "good" examination grades (Grade 5 or above):

- Students with over 95% attendance: Have an 81% chance of achieving good grades.
- Students with 90% attendance: Have only a 57% chance of achieving those same results.

By missing just 10% of school, a student's chance of success drops by nearly a quarter. Every day your child is in school, they are actively improving their chances of reaching their full potential.

CHANCES OF 5+ GCSE 5-9 GRADES INCLUDING ENGLISH AND MATHS



The Long-Term Impact of Attendance

It can be easy to underestimate the impact of a few days off, but the cumulative effect is significant:

- A student who averages 80% attendance effectively misses one whole year of education over the course of their school career.
- For a Year 11 student, missing just 17 days of school can result in a one-grade drop across every single subject in their GCSEs.
- Research shows that students who achieve Grades 9 to 5 in English and Maths missed, on average, 10 fewer days during their courses than those who did not achieve these grades.

Every Student's Journey is Different We recognise that every child's experience is unique. Attendance can sometimes be challenging due to medical needs, illness, or mental health.

We are fully committed to supporting you. Our staff team has specialised experience in supporting students who are **Emotionally Based School Non-attenders (EBSNA)**. We will work in partnership with you to explore individualized support and pathways to ensure your child continues to access a quality education.

Is my child well enough for school?

We know children sometimes cannot come to school because they are genuinely unwell—this is the right choice for them and the school community. However, medical advice suggests that children with mild illnesses (such as a cough or cold without a temperature) are often well enough to attend.

Useful Resources for Parents:

- **NHS Guidance:** [Is my child too ill for school? – NHS](#) is designed to support parents/carers in their decision-making about mild illness
- **UKHSA:** [A parent's guide to keeping kids healthy this school year](#)
- [Should I keep my child off school checklist poster](#)

Note: If you believe other factors are causing your child to feel reluctant about coming to school, please contact their **Form Tutor** in the first instance.

How to Report an Absence If your child is too ill to attend, you must notify the school **before 8:30 am** every day they are absent (unless otherwise agreed with our Attendance Officer).

- **Absence Line:** 01296 689720
- **Email:** studentabsence@cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk

Our Safety Check: If we have not heard from you by the first morning of absence, we will send a text message. If the absence remains unexplained, we will follow up with a phone call and a formal letter. Unexplained absences are recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a penalty notice from Buckinghamshire Council.

Punctuality and Appointments

- **Start Time:** Students must be in their form rooms by **8:30 am**.
- **Lateness:** Students arriving after 8:30 am must sign in at Student Reception. Reasons for lateness are logged, and persistent lateness will result in sanctions and intervention.
- **Appointments:** Please provide a copy of appointment letters in advance. For emergency appointments, please inform us as soon as possible.

Leave of Absence and Holidays In line with Buckinghamshire Council guidelines, **The Cottesloe School cannot authorise holidays during term time.**

- **Fines:** The Council administers fines to parents who take children out of school for holidays.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** If you require a 'leave of absence' for an exceptional reason, please complete a **Leave of Absence Request Form** and submit it as early as possible for consideration.

We Are Here to Help At The Cottesloe School, we want to work with you. If your child's attendance begins to fall, we will reach out to discuss how we can help.

Who to contact:

Form Tutor: For initial concerns or reluctance to attend.

Attendance Officer: Contact mblair@cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk for specific attendance queries.

Head of Year: For more complex or ongoing support needs.

Absence Line: 01296 689720 or **Email:** studentabsence@cottesloe.bucks.sch.uk if you need to call to let us know your child will not be attending school.

Important and useful documents

Working together to improve school attendance



Parent Fines for missing school: What you need to know



DfE Guide For Parents On School Attendance 2024

PDF

