



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

Supporting Your Child's School Attendance: A Guide for Parents and Carers

School attendance is about more than just being present – it's about your child feeling safe, supported, and connected. As a parent or carer, you play a key role, alongside professionals, in supporting your child's journey in education.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance helps your child:

- build friendships and feel part of the school community
- maintain routines and learning progress
- develop confidence and independence
- access support from trusted adults
- strengthen protective factors that promote wellbeing

Even small amounts of missed time can affect your child's progress, relationships, and emotional health.

What You Can Do

1. Keep track of attendance

Ask the school for your child's attendance percentage. If it drops below 90%, they may be classed as a 'persistent absentee'. This can trigger additional support, including involvement from the social worker or other professionals.

2. Talk about school regularly

Check in with your child about how they feel at school. Are there any worries or things they enjoy? Open conversations help identify issues early and show your child that their voice matters.

3. Notice patterns

Is your child often late or missing certain days? This could be linked to anxiety, peer relationships, or challenges with learning. Share concerns with the school and your child's social worker.

4. Work with the school and professionals

Pastoral care or mentoring

Help with routines or transitions

Support for emotional or mental health needs

Involvement from the Virtual School or other agencies

Listening to Your Child's Voice

Children's feelings about school matter. You can help by:

- creating a safe space for them to talk
- using drawings or emotion charts if they find it hard to express themselves
- encouraging them to share their thoughts with trusted adults
- involving their social worker in discussions when appropriate
- understanding the Bigger Picture

Key Transitions

Moving to a new school or year group can be a big change. These times can affect attendance and confidence. Talk to your child about what to expect and ask the school how they support transitions.

Working Together

Additional challenges outside of school, such as changes in living arrangements, contact with family, or health concerns can affect a child's attendance. If you're facing difficulties, speak to the school or a professional you trust. There is support available.

Schools, families, and services all have a part to play in helping children attend, engage, and thrive. If you're worried about your child's attendance, reach out early, and together we can make a difference.

Still Need Advice?

For advice on working with external agencies, contact us at virtualschool@hants.gov.uk (Children in Care) or VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk (Previously Looked After Children, Children with a Social Worker and Children in Kinship Care)