



## Why School Attendance Matters:

Regular school attendance is vital for children's education, wellbeing, and future opportunities. Missing school can lead to:

- Lower academic achievement
- Social isolation
- Increased risk of mental health difficulties
- Greater vulnerability to safeguarding concerns



## The Role of Health in Attendance:

Health-related absences are a significant contributor to persistent absence. While some absences are unavoidable, many can be managed with timely advice and reassurance.



## How GPs Can Help:

- 1. Promote Attendance in Consultations**
  - Encourage parents to send children to school **wherever possible**, even with mild symptoms.
  - Reassure families that schools can support children with minor health needs.
- 2. Provide Clear Guidance**
  - Offer practical advice on managing common conditions without prolonged absence.
  - Avoid unnecessary medical notes unless clinically required.
- 3. Work with Schools**
  - Share relevant health information (with consent) to help schools support pupils.
  - Signpost families to school-based support or local authority attendance teams.
- 4. Safeguarding**
  - Be alert to patterns of frequent absence that may indicate wider concerns.
  - Liaise with safeguarding partners where appropriate.



### Top Tips for GPs:

- **Encourage attendance:** Advise parents that most minor illnesses (e.g., colds, mild headaches) do not require time off school.
- **Reassure families:** Schools can support children with mild symptoms or ongoing conditions.
- **Avoid unnecessary notes:** Medical evidence should only be provided when clinically necessary.
- **Promote recovery at school:** Where safe, children can return before full recovery from minor ailments.
- **Signpost support:** Refer families to school nurses or local authority attendance teams if needed.
- **Safeguarding awareness:** Frequent absence may indicate wider concerns—share information appropriately.



### Myth-Busting

- **“Children must stay home for 48 hours after vomiting.”**  
*Not always.* If the child feels well and symptoms have resolved, they can return sooner.
- **“A mild cold means a child should stay home.”**  
*False.* Most colds are not a reason to miss school.
- **“GPs should provide notes for every absence.”**  
*No.* Notes are only needed for long-term or serious conditions.

### Key Message

*Every day in school counts. Your support helps children stay healthy, engaged, and safe.*

### Local contacts:

Local Authority	LA contact for family or professional for advice:
Buckinghamshire	<a href="mailto:countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">Present for Their Future   Buckinghamshire Council countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>
Oxfordshire	<a href="mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk">attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="#">Contact the Education, Employment and Training (EET) Team   Oxfordshire County Council</a>
Reading	<a href="mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a> <a href="#">Early help - Brighter Futures For Children</a>
Wokingham	<a href="mailto:Education.welfare@wokingham.gov.uk">Education.welfare@wokingham.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:triage@wokingham.gov.uk">triage@wokingham.gov.uk</a>
West Berkshire	<a href="mailto:ewss@westberks.gov.uk">ewss@westberks.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:child@westberks.gov.uk">child@westberks.gov.uk</a>