Whitefield Infant School and Nursery

Every Day Matters:

Working Together to Improve Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

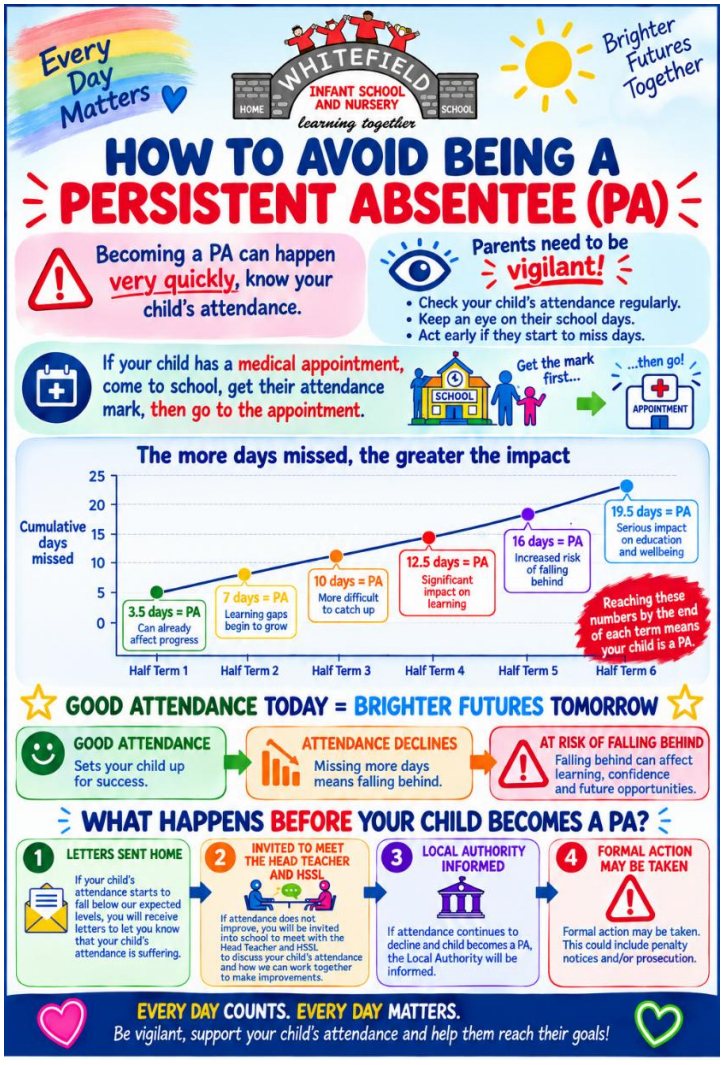
At Whitefield Infant School and Nursery, we want every child to have the very best opportunity to learn, make progress, build friendships and enjoy school. Regular attendance is a really important part of making this happen.

At the moment, our attendance at Whitefield is below the national average and below that of comparable schools. Improving this is a priority for us because, quite simply, we want the very best for our children.

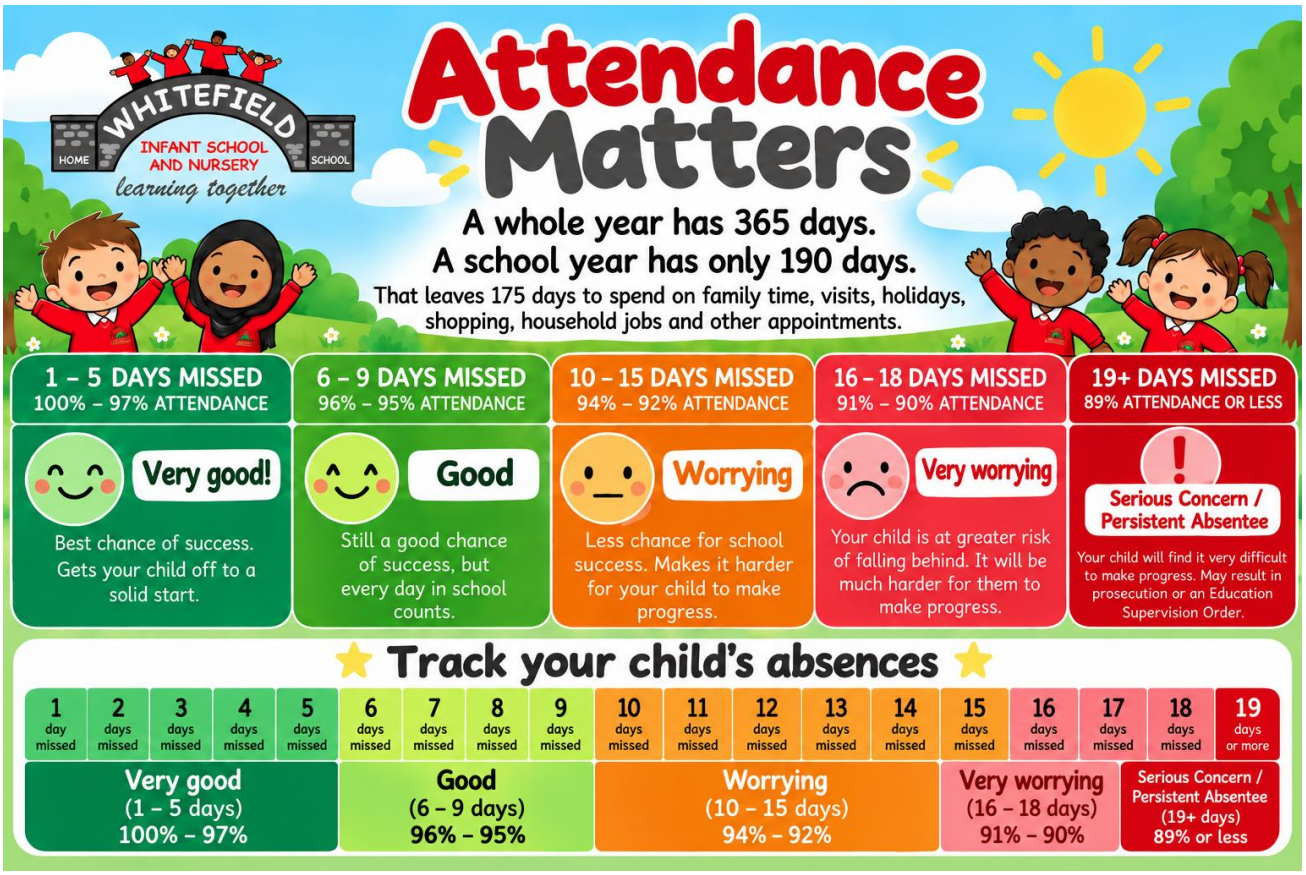
How quickly can absence build up?

A school year contains 190 school days, leaving 175 days when children are not required to be in school for family time, holidays, shopping and other activities.
We have included two simple guides to help you understand your child's attendance. Our Attendance Matters chart shows how missed days build up across the year, while our Persistent Absence guide shows just how quickly a child can reach the persistent-absence threshold.

A child is classed nationally as a persistent absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more of the school sessions available to them, for any reason. This includes both authorised and unauthorised absence.



We have also created a simple tracker for you to use at home. Each time your child misses a day, you can mark it on the tracker and see how their attendance is progressing. We hope this will make attendance much easier for everyone to understand.



What happens if attendance starts to fall?

Our aim is to work with you and support you. We don't want to wait until attendance has become a serious concern before having a conversation.

If your child's attendance begins to fall, we will contact you to make you aware. If concerns continue, you may be invited to meet with the Headteacher and/or our Home-School Support Officer so that we can understand what is happening and discuss how we can work together to improve attendance.

If attendance continues to decline, the Local Authority may become involved. Where there is ongoing unauthorised absence despite support, formal action may ultimately be considered.

However, our first priority is always to understand the situation. If there is anything making it difficult for your child to attend regularly, please talk to us. We want to help.



What if my child is a little unwell?

We completely understand that children become genuinely ill. We are not asking you to send your child to school when they are too unwell to attend (Is my child too ill for school? - NHS).

However, if your child is generally well but is just feeling a little under the weather, please send them into school. Often, once children are settled into their normal routine, they manage really well. If they become too unwell during the day, we will always contact you.



Medical and dental appointments

Wherever possible, please arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours.

We know this isn't always possible. If your child has an unavoidable appointment during the school day, please try to minimise the amount of school they miss.
For example, if the appointment time allows, bring your child into school first, let them receive their morning attendance mark, attend the appointment and then return to school afterwards.

Children receive two attendance marks every day – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This means that even when an appointment cannot be avoided, your child may still be able to attend for part of the day.

We need your help

Please use the guides and tracker we have provided to keep a close eye on your child's attendance. Persistent absence can happen much more quickly than many people realise.

We also recognise that some children, including those with SEND, disabilities, medical needs or other individual circumstances, can face additional barriers to attendance. We will always consider individual circumstances and work with families to provide appropriate support.

Ultimately, this is about giving our children the best possible start. Every day in school gives them another opportunity to learn something new, develop their confidence, spend time with friends and make progress.
Every day really does matter.

Thank you for working with us to improve attendance and, most importantly, to give every Whitefield child the opportunities they deserve.

Mrs Mason and Mr Wesley

