What can you do to help?

- If you suspect that your child may be missing school or is unhappy at school you should contact the school as soon as possible so that you can work with them to resolve any difficulties.
- Be on alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as bullying or problems with school work and discuss these with the school.
- If your child is ill or absent for any other reasons, contact the school on the first day of absence.
- Make sure your child arrives at school on time.
- Take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school.

Interesting Facts

Attending school every day = 100% attendance

Attending 4 ½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year

Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year.

Attending 3 ½ days a week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed.

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up missing a whole 2 years from school.

Make every minute count

WALKERINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

think smart be kind

Walkeringham Primary School

School Attendance

Information for Parents

Why is it important for children not to miss school?

All parents want the best for their children and for them to get on well in life. Having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life. They only get one chance at school and your child's future may be affected by not attending school or alternative provision regularly.

If children do not attend school regularly they may:

- Have difficulties keeping up with school work. In a busy school day it is hard for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships: a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery through primary school will also help your child later on in their life. Children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of securing a job when they are adults.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, their teacher and the other children in the class. Some parents may be finding it difficult to ensure their child attends school regularly. If this is the case please speak to Mrs King as soon as possible so that the situation can be addressed.

What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child? In primary schools less than 65% of children achieve good results in English and Maths with an average of 15 days absence a year compared to almost 90% where the average is less than 8 days. Parents can be very surprised at how quickly their children can accumulate 15 days absence within a year.

Research has also shown that children who are not in school can become vulnerable. For example, children who play truant are more likely to be drawn into crime than those who do not.

What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a suitable, full time education. As a parent you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at school or making other arrangements which provide a suitable full time education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly – even if they miss school without you knowing – the Local authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities. Parents are responsible for making sure that their registered children regularly attend school or any alternative provision arrange by them. If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible.

Reasons such as family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observances would be acceptable for **short** absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include family holidays, birthday, shopping and being tired.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice of being taken to court.

The LA may decide to prosecute a parent. If this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly;
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

What about authorised absence?

There may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. This is to be expected and you should follow the school's procedure for notifying illness.

Children may also have to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time. However, you should try to make routine appointments such as dental checkups during the school holiday or after school hours. Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences can only be authorised by the school.