



Is your child in school today?



Revised Nov 2003

You have been given this leaflet today as you are responsible for a child who was not in school. It is possible that you have unknowingly committed an offence under the Education Act 1996 and we would like to offer this advice so that the same situation does not re-occur.

Why does school attendance matter?

Most pupils go to school every day and enjoy it. Some children may experience difficulties in attending school for many different reasons. A parent or carer may not be aware that this is happening.

Torbay Council's Education Department recognises that regular school attendance is

essential. Children need to enjoy their time in school and make the most of the opportunities available to them.

If a pupil misses one day a week for their entire school career they would lose the equivalent of two school years. The time missed at school can lead to gaps in knowledge that become difficult to fill.

The Education Welfare Service is aiming to reduce unauthorised absence through an antitruancy scheme operating within Torbay. This is a joint initiative between Torbay Council and the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. Through this initiative the police have the power to take truants back to school.

Remember, if your child is not at school:

- they may be putting themselves or others at risk
- they are missing out on educational opportunities
- parents and carers can be fined up to £1000

What can you do to help?

- Make sure your child arrives at school on time
- Be aware of the school's rules and routines
- If your child is ill, contact the school on the first day they are ill. When the pupil returns to school send an explanatory note of absence
- Ask the school's permission in advance if you wish your child to miss school for an exceptional reason. These are:
 - approved parental holiday
 - a day of religious observance
- Above all, show interest in your child's schoolwork and maintain contact with your child's school.

Unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- shopping
- birthday treats and trips
- non-urgent medical and dental appointments

How can the Education Welfare Service help?

Each school in Torbay has a nominated Education Welfare Officer or Social Inclusion Welfare Officer, who visits regularly to check registers and discuss pupils about whom the school is concerned. The Welfare Officer can provide help and advice on:

- school attendance issues
- bullying
- exclusions
- child protection procedures
- advice and information on other agencies

What the law says

The Education Act 1996 makes it very clear that parents must ensure that their child of school age receive a full time and regular education. For most parents this is in school. Children registered at a school must attend (with very few exceptions). Only a school can authorise a child's absence. If a child is not registered or does not attend regularly, then Torbay Council may take legal action against the parent or carers.

Devon and Cornwall Police involvement

Patrolling officers may speak to children who are truanting from school. In addition, Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 empowers the police to remove truants from public places and return them back to school.

The Torbay EWS team are:

Social Inclusion Welfare Officers:

Josie Carter at Paignton Community and Sports College.
 John Cann at Torquay Community College.
 Tracy Forte at Westlands.
 Christopher Wood at Brixham Community College.

Education Welfare Officers:

Peter Ingham. PRU, Collaton, Curledge Street, Foxhole
 Infants, Foxhole Juniors, Hayes, Oldway, Preston, Roselands, Sacred Heart.

Teresa Wills - Churston Ferrers Grammar, Torbay School, Brixham C of E Infants, Eden Park Infants,
 Eden Park Juniors, Furzeham, Galmpton, Chestnut, St. Margaret Clitherow, White Rock.

Georgina Newson - Combe Pafford, Ellacombe, Mayfield, Watcombe.

Veronica Ballard - T.B.G.S, T.G.S.G, Babbacombe, Barton, Cockington, Homelands, Ilsham, St
 Margarets, St. Marychurch, Sherwell Valley, Shiphay, Torre, Upton St James,
 Warberry,

Alison Newman - St Cuthbert Mayne, Priory, Queensway, + Court Work

Caroline Cook - Education member of the Youth Offending Team.

If you wish to call any of the above officers please telephone: 01803 208248/9/6

If things go wrong

If you are unhappy with your EWO, try to sort it out with her/him. If you can't sort it out, then please contact:

Principal Education Welfare Officer

Learning & Cultural Services Directorate
Oldway, Torbay Road, Paignton TQ3 2TE
Tel: 01803 208248/9/6

Paignton
Tel: 01803 208246
e-mail: Education.Welfare@Torbay.gov.uk

Torbay's

E establishes a link between home and school
D develops pupils' confidence and self esteem
U upholds pupils' rights to education
C counsels pupils and parents
A attends Case Conferences
T treats pupils and parents as..
I individuals
O opposes all discrimination
N needs co-operation from its partners

W welcomes contact from parents and pupils
E expects pupils to attend school
L lets parents and pupils see their files
F facilitates return to school for absentees
A advises families about benefits
R responds to need in families and schools
E enlists other help when necessary

S supports pupils with difficulties of all sorts
E engages all in partnership
R reacts promptly
V visits people at home
I initiates legal proceedings when necessary
C contacts other agencies appropriately
E exists to serve pupils, parents and schools

