TWIN OAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL · A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

# Every Day Counts

Our Attendance Policy in brief: why being in school matters and how we will work together

Twin Oaks Primary School

## 1 Why every day matters

At Twin Oaks we want every child in school, on time, every day. The primary years build the skills every later lesson depends on.

### Learning builds step by step

Reading, writing and numbers are learned one lesson at a time. Miss a day and you miss a step. Early gaps are much harder to fill later.

### Friends and belonging

School is where children make friends, learn to get on with others and feel part of a community.

### Safe with trusted adults

School is a safe place where caring adults see every child every day and can spot when help is needed.

### It is the law

Parents must make sure their child goes to school regularly. The school, Lewisham Council and the courts all have a duty to make sure this happens.

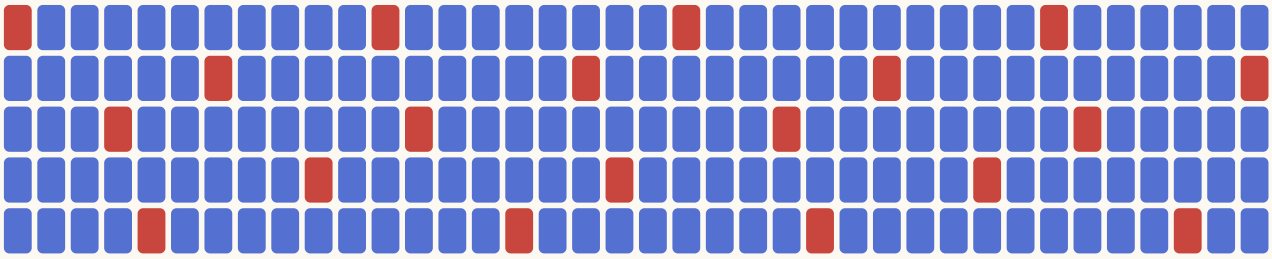
### Our target: at least 97% attendance for every child

That means missing no more than about 5 or 6 days in the whole school year. Classes that reach 97% in a week earn a class reward.

## 2 What missed days add up to

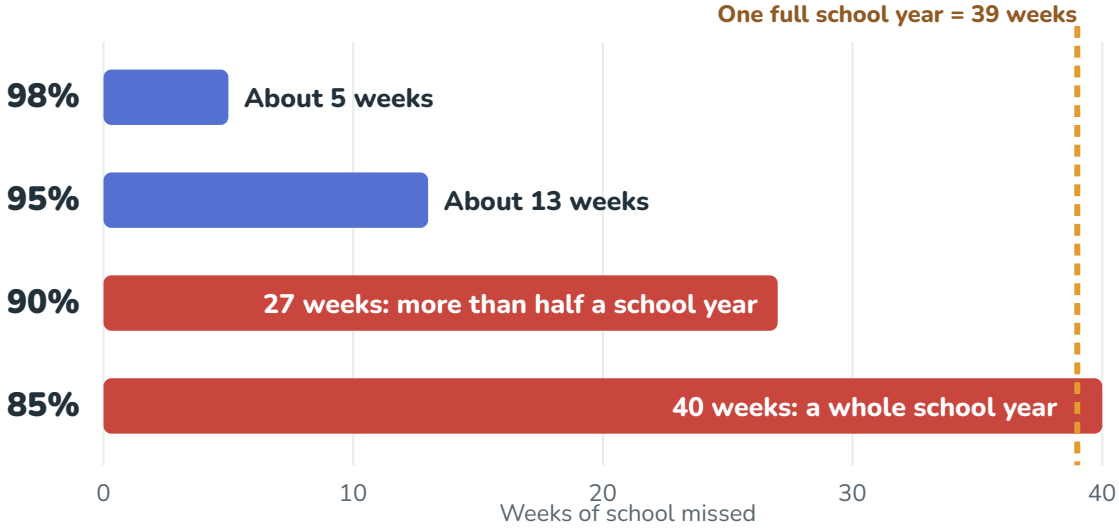
A school year has 190 days. A few days off here and there soon adds up to weeks of lost learning.

### This is what 90% attendance looks like over one school year



Day in school  Day missed  Each square is one school day. 19 red squares = 4 weeks of lessons missed.

### Weeks of learning missed across 7 years of primary school




**Persistently absent** At 90% or below, a child counts as persistently absent. That is the same as missing one day every two weeks.

## 10 minutes late a day

adds up to **more than 30 hours** of missed learning a year, or **around 6 school days**. Late children also miss the calm start to the day and can feel embarrassed walking into a class that has already begun.

## 3 “But it’s only primary school…”

We often hear these worries. Here are the facts.

**? “It’s only primary school. The important stuff starts later.”**

✓ Primary school is where children learn to read, write and use numbers. Everything at secondary school depends on these skills. Children who fall behind early often struggle to catch up.

**? “They’re only young. They can catch up.”**

✓ Catching up is hard. While a child is away, the class moves on. Missed phonics or times tables leave gaps that show up for years.

**? “A day off here and there doesn’t matter.”**

✓ It quickly adds up. One day off every two weeks means missing a month of school each year.

**? “Reception doesn’t count. They’re just playing.”**

✓ Play in Reception is carefully planned learning. It builds speaking, early reading, numbers and social skills. Good habits of coming to school start here.

**? “A cheaper holiday in term time is worth it.”**

✓ Term-time holidays are not allowed except in exceptional circumstances. They can lead to a fine, and children miss learning that is not repeated.

**? “My child is a bit unwell, so they should stay home.”**

✓ Children with a minor cold, headache or tummy ache can usually come in. If they get worse, we will call you straight away. Keep them home only if they are seriously ill.

**? “My child is anxious about school, so it’s kinder to keep them home.”**

✓ Staying away usually makes worries grow. Talk to us. We can put support in place to help your child feel safe and settled.

# 4 What we ask of families

## The school day

| 7.30am | 8.45am | 9.00am | 9.30am | 3.30pm |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breakfast Club opens | School day starts and the gates open | Gates close. After this, come to the office and be marked **late** | Register closes. After this, marked **absent** for the morning | School day ends |

**Child ill or can't come in? Tell us before 9am on the first day**

**020 8692 4321**

admin@twinoaks.lewisham.sch.uk

## If your child is off

- Tell us why your child is off and when you expect them back.
- If we do not hear from you, we will call, text and email to check your child is safe.
- If your child is off a lot, we may ask for medical evidence such as an appointment card or prescription.

## Appointments

- Please book doctor, dentist and clinic appointments outside school hours where you can.
- If an appointment must be in school time, tell the office in advance and show the letter.
- Bring your child in before and after the appointment.

## Holidays and other time off

- Time off in term time is only agreed in **exceptional circumstances**, such as a death in the family or a serious family crisis.
- Family holidays are very unlikely to be agreed.
- Ask the office for a leave form at least **2 weeks** before any time off.

## Please also

- Give us at least two up-to-date emergency phone numbers.
- Tell us about any big changes at home that might affect your child.
- Reply quickly when we contact you about attendance.

## How we will help

**We will always try to help first.** Many families face real difficulties getting children to school. Tell us what is happening and we will work with you.

- Breakfast Club from 7.30am
- The Snug: a calm start with our learning mentor
- A short-term later start or part-time timetable
- Extra adult support in class or at drop-off
- Help for SEND, health needs or anxiety
- Family Thrive (Early Help) and Lewisham support
- Catch-up help after a long absence
- Class rewards and attendance chats at parents' evenings

# 5 Support first, action if needed

**We will always try to help first**, using the support on the previous page. But the law also expects schools and the council to act when a child keeps missing school.

## If attendance does not improve, these are the steps

**Support comes first at every step.**
Steps get more serious only if attendance does not improve.

*Each case is looked at individually. A fine can be considered once a child has missed 10 sessions (5 days) without permission within 10 school weeks. Each parent can be fined for each child. Fine amounts and legal steps come from the school's full Attendance Policy and may change if national rules change.*

**Children's safety always comes first.** If we cannot contact a family, staff may visit the home. If we are worried about a child's safety, we will act straight away, which may include contacting children's social care or the police.

## Talk to us early. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help.

**School office (to report absence)**
020 8692 4321 · admin@twinoaks.lewisham.sch.uk

**Headteacher (leads on attendance)**
Through the school office, or speak to us at the gate

**Pupil Welfare Officer**
Through the school office

**Governor for attendance**
Morgan Bradshaw, through the school office

**Every day counts. Thank you for helping your child to be here, on time, every day.**

*The full Twin Oaks Attendance Policy is available on the school website or from the school office.*