



EYFS Information

Inclusion and Attendance Team

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Helping Your Child Get Ready for School

Information for Parents

The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced new guidance to help close the school readiness gap and ensure your child starts Reception confident, happy and ready to learn. The guidance encourages nurseries, schools and families to work together throughout the year, rather than seeing transition as a single event before school starts.

What is School Readiness?

Being school ready is not about being able to read, write or count before starting school. It is about children developing the confidence, independence and social skills needed to thrive in a school environment. This includes:

- Communicating their needs and feelings
- Following simple instructions
- Playing and sharing with others
- Using the toilet independently
- Washing hands and managing personal care
- Putting on coats and shoes
- Feeling confident separating from parents and carer



Helping Your Child Attend Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

At Sheffield City Council Attendance & Inclusion Service, we know that every family faces challenges from time to time. We also know that regular school attendance gives children the best opportunity to learn, develop friendships, build confidence and achieve their full potential.

School is about much more than lessons. It helps children develop social skills, resilience, routines and a sense of belonging within their community.

Starting Reception is a big step! Every child develops at their own pace, so don't worry if your child cannot do everything yet. This checklist is simply a helpful guide to show what you can practise together before starting school.

Independence & Self-Care

- I can use the toilet by myself.
- I can wipe myself and wash my hands.
- I can put on and take off my coat.
- I can put on and take off my shoes.
- I can manage simple clothing, such as trousers and jumpers.
- I can open my lunch box, snacks and water bottle.
- I can recognise my name on my bag or peg.
- I have a go at doing things for myself before asking for help.

Social & Emotional Skills

- I can share toys and take turns.
- I can play alongside and with other children.
- I can say goodbye to my parent or carer and feel safe with another trusted adult.
- I am beginning to talk about and manage my feelings.
- I can cope with small disappointments, such as losing a game or waiting for my turn.
- I can listen to simple rules and boundaries.
- I can follow simple instructions as part of a group.



Communication & Understanding

- I can talk in sentences and adults can usually understand me.
- I enjoy listening to stories.
- I can listen and concentrate for a short period of time.
- I can follow two simple instructions, such as *"Put your book away and sit on the carpet."*
- I can answer simple questions.
- I ask questions and enjoy finding out about new things.
- I can tell an adult when I need help.

Physical Development

- I can hold a pencil, crayon or colouring pencil and have a go at drawing.
- I enjoy drawing, colouring and making marks.
- I can run, jump and climb.
- I can balance and move safely.
- I can use child-safe scissors with support.
- I enjoy activities such as playdough, building blocks and threading to strengthen my hands.

Remember...

School readiness is not about being perfect or being able to do everything before starting school.

Children learn at different speeds. The most important things are helping your child to feel confident, have a go, become more independent and know that school is a safe and happy place to learn.

Every little step you practise at home helps your child take a big step towards starting school with confidence.



Why is attendance important?

Children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- Achieve better educational outcomes.
- Develop positive friendships and social skills.
- Feel part of their school community.
- Build confidence and resilience.
- Access support quickly if they need help.
- Develop routines that prepare them for future education and employment.

Even a small amount of absence can have a significant impact on learning.

Did you know?

Missing one day of school every fortnight is equivalent to missing nearly four weeks of education across a school year.

Phonics and Early Years Learning

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), following the Development Matters framework, children develop crucial foundational skills through play, communication, language, literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. Daily phonics and early reading activities build vocabulary, listening, and social skills. Missing EYFS sessions can disrupt these critical foundations, affecting school readiness and long-term learning. Consistent attendance supports smooth transitions to primary school.

Arriving to school on time

Why Punctuality Matters

If a child is just 10 minutes late every day, this adds up to more than 30 hours of lost learning each year.

Being on time is an important part of good attendance.

In primary schools, phonics is taught first thing in the morning. Missing or arriving late to these lessons can make it harder for children to develop their reading,



speech and language skills, as each lesson builds on previous learning. Attending school every day helps children stay on track and grow in confidence.

The beginning of the school day is often when teachers:

- Welcome children into class.
- Explain the day's learning.
- Share important information.
- Support children to settle and feel ready to learn.

Arriving late can mean children:

- Miss important instructions.
- Feel unsettled or anxious entering the classroom.
- Find it harder to catch up with learning.
- Miss opportunities to socialise with friends.
- Feeling left out of friendships

Simple ways to improve punctuality

- Prepare school uniform and equipment the night before.
- Establish a regular bedtime routine.
- Set alarms and allow extra time for unexpected delays.
- Leave home a few minutes earlier than necessary.
- Talk positively about school and the day ahead.

What Parents and Carers Can Do

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting good attendance.

Creating Positive Routines

- Establish regular bedtime and morning routines.
- Ensure children get enough sleep.
- Prepares bags, lunches and uniforms the evening before.

Talking About School

- Show interest in your child's learning.
- Encourage positive conversations about school.
- Celebrate achievements and effort.



Working with School

- Contact school early if there are concerns.
- Let school know about difficulties affecting attendance.
- Attend meetings and work together to find solutions.

Promoting Good Attendance

- Arrange routine appointments outside school hours where possible.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Encourage attendance even if children are worried about friendships or learning.

When Attendance Becomes Difficult

Sometimes children may find attending school challenging. This can happen for many reasons. Speak with school if you notice...

- Reluctance to attend school.
- Frequent complaints of feeling unwell before school.
- Increased anxiety about attending.
- Changes in behaviour or mood.
- Regular lateness or absence.
- Minor Illness and School Attendance
- The NHS advises... children can usually attend school with minor illnesses such as a runny nose, mild cough or sore throats. . If you are unsure whether your child is well enough for school, support and advice are available from your child's school, your GP, NHS 111, your local pharmacist, or the NHS "Is My Child Too Ill for School?" guidance.

www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/



Where can I get help>

You do not have to manage concerns alone. If your child or family are experiencing difficulties, support is available.

Service	How They Can Help	Contact Details
Your Child's School 	Speak to your child's Class Teacher, Attendance Lead, Pastoral Lead or SENDCo for advice and support.	Contact your child's school
School Nursing Service 	Advice and support regarding health and wellbeing concerns.	0114 305 3224
Your GP 	Support with medical concerns affecting attendance.	Contact your GP surgery
Attendance & Inclusion Service 	Works alongside schools and families to identify barriers to attendance and support children to access education successfully.	inclusion&attendance@sheffieid.gov.uk
Soluna by Kooth 	Free online wellbeing support for young people.	www.kooth.com 
YoungMinds 	Advice, information and support for parents and carers.	www.youngminds.org.uk 
NHS Mental Health Support	Mental health advice and local support services.	www.nhs.uk/mental-health

		
<u>Family Hubs</u> 	Support for parents, children and families, including early help and parenting support.	www.sheffield.gov.uk/family-hubs 
<u>SENDIAS</u> 	Free, impartial, and confidential SEND information, advice, and support.	0114 273 6009 ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk
<u>Continence Service</u> 	Specialist bladder and bowel assessment, advice and treatment.	0114 271 3248
<u>ERIC Helpline</u> 	Advice and support regarding childhood continence issues.	0808 801 0343
<u>Family Intervention Service</u> 	They work with families to recognise and build on their strengths, and to find solutions that work for the family to meet their needs with support from relevant professionals and the family's network. This includes working with families who have children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).	Early Help Advice Line: Call 0114 273 4855 to discuss your family's needs and be pointed in the right direction.
<u>Citizen Advice service</u> 	We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice Sheffield, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality,	Citizens Advice Sheffield Advice Line: 0808 278 7820

	independent advice or advocacy. That's why we're here: to give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever their problem.	
<u>Neurodiversity Sheffield</u>	Through this inclusive ethos we offer information, training, and support to families of children & young people living with neurodivergence by: • raising knowledge, understanding and awareness • providing strategies for managing issues related to neurodivergence. • promoting the strengths, individuality and potential of every child/young person	neurodiversity.sheffield@family-action.org.uk tel:0114 2412733

