



July 2024

School Attendance Update Summer 2024 – Important Changes

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to you because the Department for Education (DfE) have introduced some new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) for managing school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices and amended the law. These changes come into effect from 19th August 2024 and all schools and LAs across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

It is important that school and parents/carers work together to ensure your child attends. By working with you, the school can step in early to help prevent patterns of absence developing.

Where it can be demonstrated that a parent/carers is not fulfilling their parental responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable fulltime education then the school can consider requesting that the LA take further action. This can be in the form of a penalty notice, prosecution or the school may suggest other formal interventions.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

The threshold for when a school should consider the next steps is **10 sessions** (equal to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a **rolling period of 10 school weeks** (a school week being any week in which there is at least one school session). This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including late after the registers close.

At this point, if the school believes it is likely attendance will improve with further support, then they may pass the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if attendance does not improve.

First Offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be.

- £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, paid within 21 days

Second Offence (within 3 years)

- £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days – **no reductions**

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

- The third time an offence is committed within 3 years, a penalty notice **will not** be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term Time Holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence during term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances.

If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued.

Requests for Term Time Leave

Schools are not expected to authorise Term Time leave retrospectively. **If a request for term-time leave is made after the period of absence it will automatically be unauthorised.** All requests must be made prior to the period of absence. Withdrawal from Learning Forms are available from the school office and are on our website