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Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to remind you the Department for Education (DfE) introduced some new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) for managing school attendance in September 2024. They introduced a **new national framework for penalty notice and amended the law**. These changes come into effect from the 19 August 2024 and all schools and LAs across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. All schools and LAs are expected to promote school attendance and provide support to remove barriers where a pupil is struggling to attend school. For this to be successful parents/carers need to work with the school.

Where it can be demonstrated that a parent/carers is not fulfilling their parental responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time 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

To provide consistency, the Government have introduced a new national framework for when schools and LAs believe that they have exhausted all offers of support, and the parent/carers is not engaging with the attempt to improve their child's attendance at school. The threshold for when a school should consider next steps is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means 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 close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period.

At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support. They may then decide to refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if the attendance does not improve.



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Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. The new costs and process is outlined below:

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 if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years) -The second 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.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

For more information – the following Education Blog is a useful resource: [Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2017/01/16/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/)

Term Time Holiday

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 in 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 then 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. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

Regards

Daniel Webster

Headteacher