

Dear Parents/Carers,

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE LAW REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (INCLUDING HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME) FROM SCHOOL

We need to bring to your attention that a new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law.

These new Government regulations will come into effect from the **19th of August 2024**.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period;
2. The first time this threshold is met, a penalty notice will be issued. The amount of the fine will be £80 (currently £60) per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 (currently £120) if paid within 28 days of being issued. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court;
3. If within three years, the threshold is met for a second time, the fine will automatically be triggered at the higher rate of £160 per parent, per child. There will be no option to pay the lower rate of £80;
4. If the threshold is met for a third time in a 3-year rolling period, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. Instead, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be ordered.

Further information on how the new rules may affect you can be found by visiting

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

The school information section of our website also provides full details of the 2024/2025 term time dates. These are also available below:

	School Opens	School Closes
AUTUMN TERM 1	3 rd September 2024	24 th October 2024
AUTUMN TERM 2	4 th November 2024	19 th December 2024
SPRING TERM 1	6 th January 2025	14 th February 2025
SPRING TERM 2	25 th February 2025	4 th April 2025
SUMMER TERM 1	22 nd April 2025	23 rd May 2025
SUMMER TERM 2	2 nd June 2025	22 nd July 2025

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example: 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.

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 from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

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

(within 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice)

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. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

This is a criminal offence and a parent may end up with a criminal record.