

4th July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Department for Education (DfE) have shared with schools and Local Authorities changes to attendance guidance that will become statutory and must be implemented from August 19th, 2024. These changes must be made by all schools and Local Authorities across the country, with the aim of ensuring consistent approaches. [A copy of the press release can be found at this link.](#)

These changes have been broken down into 4 categories.

1) A new National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices

Any attendance penalty notices issued after the 19th of August 2024 will be issued in line with the new regulations. The new Penalty Notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice, for each child who is absent. For example, 2 parents and 3 children, each parent will receive 3 penalty notices for £160 each, with a family total of £960 in fines.
- The fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- This will be considered your first offence.
- The next time an offence occurs, within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice is issued, the fine will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, with no reduction.
- The third time an offence occurs this will be presented to the Magistrate's court with no penalty notice issued.

This will include Term Time Leave fines, and Irregular Attendance. Term time leave does not just include holidays. Where a child is absent and it is believed they are absent due to term time leave, schools will be expected to carry out a home visit and see the child on or before the 3rd school day of absence.

For irregular attendance – where a child has unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 school days) or more in any 10-week period, the school must consider escalation to prosecution. Sessions refer to each half a school day, we have 2 sessions a day, morning and afternoon. The school must consider the reasons for the absence, the support already offered, and the engagement of the parents/carers and young person. These 10 sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks, or unauthorised absence.

It is therefore important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. We will consider NHS guidance [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-protection-in-children-and-young-people-settings-including-education) and [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-doctor/when-to-call-the-doctor-for-your-child/) when making our decision whether to authorise absence due to illness.

2) Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance

From August 2024, the DfE's guidance on attendance will become statutory. [The current guidance and statutory guidance can be found at this link.](#)

This clarifies the expectations for parents, schools and the Local Authority to promote the importance of regular attendance at school, and to provide ideas for support and interventions when a young person is not attending school on a regular basis.

3) Regulation changes to modernise school attendance and admission registers

The predominant change is around the use of attendance coding for schools to use on their attendance register. This may mean that you will see different marks on your child's attendance certificate. The H code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed, therefore Headteachers can no longer authorise term time leave, unless there are exceptional circumstances covered by the C code and must request an attendance penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absence.

4) Regulations will come into force on the 19th of August 2024 to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools.

This means that your child's attendance will be shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority every day. This will be live data. This will allow the DfE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and see improvements in attendance, and will allow the Local Authority to provide advice, support and Early Help services. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends for example a child reported as ill in the same week each year, or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence.

With all the changes, the priority is supporting children to be in school every day. Every school day matters.

Kind regards

Mrs Sarah Lanforth
Headteacher