



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE UPDATE – 2024/2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are writing to you because the Department of Education (DfE) has 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 came into effect from the start of this academic year. All schools across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

As a family of schools, we have been working through the guidance to ensure a joined and consistent approach. One that enables us to meet our legal obligations whilst also working with our respective school communities.

What is the new DfE guidance relating to penalty notices?

To provide consistency, the Government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absence. 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 term-time holidays, 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.

Full details of all of the changes can be found by visiting the Government webpage: -

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

What are the suggested penalty notices from the DfE?

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) - An offence for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance will not result in a penalty notice, but instead alternative action should be taken. This will often include prosecution by the Magistrates' Court. A magistrate can impose fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

What have we agreed as a Family of Schools?

As a family of schools, we have decided, and agreed, that **we may only consider the above penalty notices** if there are concerns about your child's attendance. At this point, the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support.

At any time, if a child's absence becomes a significant concern, the individual school will consider whether or not they will request a penalty notice to be issued by the local authority. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration extenuating circumstances.

If the school has major attendance concerns and work with the family has not resulted in improved attendance then the school may have to refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action, if the attendance does not improve.

For further information on attendance procedures in your child's school, please see your individual school's attendance policy.

Kind regards,

Colonel Frank Seely Family of Schools