



July 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

RE: Changes to Penalty Charge Notices for Term Time Absence

As a MAT we are incredibly proud of our pupil's attendance and the brilliant support we receive from our families to ensure that every child is in school every day. We have seen first-hand the impact that good attendance has on our pupil's wellbeing and academic outcomes and know that you all join us in wanting the very best for your child's educational journey.

Following recent changes to the Government guidance, we are writing to you today to inform you of important changes which may affect your family should your child be absent from school during term time. The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and will come into effect from 19 August 2024. This means that any unauthorised absence after this date will be subject to the new Regulations and it is important to consider the implications of this change prior to taking your child out of school, particularly for a term time holiday.

What has changed?

1. Only two penalty notices can be issued within a three-year period.

- The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.
- The **first penalty notices** for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.
- If a **second penalty notice** is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.
- A **third penalty notice** cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

2. There is a new national threshold for issuing penalty notices, however the Local Authority retain the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the new national threshold is met.

- There has been a new national threshold for issuing penalty notices which has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.
- However, if the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

What hasn't changed?

- Schools remain **unable to authorise absence within term time** except in very exceptional circumstances. The list of what may constitute an exceptional circumstance has not changed and is detailed on each school's leave of absence request form.
- Any **penalty notices are issued by and paid directly to the Local Authority**. The school receive no funding from these notices and are sadly unable to support with queries or questions related to them.
- **Daily school attendance is important** and as such, our schools will do all that they can to ensure attendance for every child on every day.

As a MAT, it is our key priority to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve great things during their educational journey with us and we hope, with your support, that you are able to join us in ensuring that your child attends school every day.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Hayward". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'H'.

Mr Hayward