

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing.

Information for Parents

The Department for Education has recently introduced a new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Reasons for Penalty notices

Under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

These absences could be a combination of the following codes:

G – Term time Leave of Absence

O – Unauthorised Absence – failure to contact the school (unexplained absence) may result in an unauthorised absence

U – Late after the registers have closed

Who is Liable for a Penalty Notice?

Penalty notices are now issued for each parent for each child (per parent, per child). *Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility*

For example, if a family with three children took a term time leave of absence, each parent would receive three penalty notices for each child.

First Offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the fine amount would be: £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days of being issued. This can be reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days of being issued.

Second Offence

If a second penalty notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence within a three-year period there will not be a discount for early payment. The penalty notice is payable at the full amount of £160 within 28 days of the date of being issued.

Third Offence/any further offences within a three-year period

If there is a third instance of term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence, penalty notice will not be issued.

Any further cases will be referred directly to Magistrate's Court for prosecution. Magistrates can impose a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child.

If a parent is found guilty of an offence, this is recorded as a criminal offence and will show on any DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks as 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.