

5th June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may already be aware that the Department for Education are making some important changes to attendance guidance from the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The DFE have recently shared with schools and local authorities, details of the changes which are being made to ensure a consistent approach by all schools and local authorities across the Country.

We have broken down the changes into 4 categories.

### **1. A new National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices**

Any attendance penalty notices issued after the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 will be issued in line with the new regulations, which are as follows;

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice, for each child who is absent. For example, for a family with 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, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil within 3 years, will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days with no option of a reduced amount.
- In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, alternative action will be taken, which may include prosecution or other legal interventions.

Penalty notices will be issued for term time leave and irregular attendance. Term time leave does not just include holidays. Where a child is absent and it is believed it is due to term time leave, schools will be expected to carry out a home visit and see the child on or before the 3<sup>rd</sup> school day of absence.

Irregular attendance, where a child has unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in any 10-week period, the school must consider escalation to prosecution. Sessions refer to each half of the school day, with 2 sessions each day. The school will consider the reasons for the absence, the support already offered and the engagement of the parent/carer and young person. These 10 sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks or unauthorised absences.

It is extremely important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. As always, 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/health-conditions/child-illness/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/) when making the decision whether to authorise absences due to illness.

## 2. Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance

The Department for Education have updated the Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance (applies from 19th August 2024) which is available on the DFE website. 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 the register. This may mean that you see different marks on your child's attendance certificate, including sub codes. For example, C2 for a reduced timetable or Y4 for school closed due to weather conditions. The H code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed. 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.

Please see attached a list of attendance codes for your information.

## 4. Regulations will come into force on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools.

This means that your child's attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education and the local authority every day as live data. This will help the DFE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and see improvement in attendance and allow the local authority to provide advice, support and early help services. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends. For example, if a child is reported ill the same week every year, or a certain year group/cohort with patterns of absence.

With all of these changes the priority is supporting our pupils to access school every day. Regular and punctual attendance is both a legal requirement of parents and essential to ensure uninterrupted progress to enable children to fulfil their full potential.

It is important that you are aware of these changes and the consequences of unauthorised absence from school. I trust you will understand that these are Nationally imposed changes which the School is required to implement.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Burridge  
Headteacher