

LEARNING TOGETHER TRUST

Co-CEOs/Executive Headteachers: Mr. Stuart Colothan
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🌐 www.learningtogethertrust.org

Friday 13th September 2024

Re: School Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance at school has been identified as a national priority by both the Department for Education (DFE) and OFSTED.

Research in 2022 by the DFE found that pupils with higher attainment in end of Key Stage assessments had lower levels of absence.

We provide a wide range of support to ensure that children attend school as often as possible and work with families to help address difficulties and challenges they may face.

In some circumstances, Local Authorities may issue parent(s) / carer(s) with an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) if a child's absence record does not improve.

This year, new national guidance has come into effect from 19th August 2024. The summary of the changes are included below:

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered. *(The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.)*
2. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
3. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent/carer for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If a parent/carer then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

On the reverse of this letter are some Frequently Asked Questions that you may have about EPNs.

If you have any further questions, please contact your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. M. Rigby
Head of System Leadership & Attendance Champion

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Frequently Asked Questions - Education Penalty Notices

If I have already booked a holiday for next year, could I receive a penalty fine at the new higher rate?

- Yes, if the absence has not been authorised by the Head Teacher of your child's school. Remember, only a Head Teacher can agree whether an absence can be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?

- You must submit an Absence Request form at least 20 days before the proposed absence. It will be for your child's Head Teacher to decide as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

Do the 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have to be taken all at the same time before a penalty fine is issued to the parent/carer?

- No, a penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.

What happens if I am issued with a penalty fine and I don't pay it?

- Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty fine is an opportunity for you to settle out of court. If you don't take this opportunity, you can be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

What should I do if I am worried about my child's attendance?

- In the first instance you should contact your child's school and ask for advice on how they can support you to improve the situation.