



25th October 2024

Headteacher - Patrick Earnshaw
Deputy Headteacher - Mathew Downs

Dear Parent/Carer (this letter is being sent to all families with students in Years 7 - 11),

Re: Reminder updated DfE regulations on reducing unauthorised absence from school

Earlier in the term I wrote to you advising of nationwide changes to the DfE policy on managing attendance and absence in schools. These changes are intended to reverse the decline in school attendance seen nationally since Covid. You will recall a key element is the application of fines for more than 10 sessions authorised absence (a session being an am or pm registration) within a 10 week period.

You can find this letter here highcliffe.school/l/bk7dt

If your child is absent and you have not received advance permission from the Headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action. These measures can include:

- Issue a fixed penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine' – your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.
- Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court – if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you are not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
- Prosecute you – this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country is £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012. Please do not be surprised if you receive a penalty fine in the event your child misses 10 or more sessions in a 10-week period without authorisation.

If absence persists, further escalation is possible. A diagram can be found at the end of this letter to better explain this.

If you do have any concerns about your child's attendance, please contact the school directly to discuss this.

Yours faithfully



Mr P Earnshaw
Headteacher

Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools **after 19th August 2024**.

Who may be fined?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example: a 5 day holiday would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

Second Offence

(within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child, payable within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. If convicted, sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months, and you will have a criminal record.