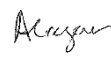


Our Lady's RC Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date effective from	Autumn 2026
Person Responsible	Headteacher
Date of Next Review	Autumn 2027
Version	1

		Person responsible	Date
Signed		Person Responsible/Subject Leader	04.9.2026
Signed		Headteacher	04.9.2026
Signed		Governor	04.9.2026

Our Core Values & Mission

During Summer 2023 workshops, we revisited both our Mission Statement and Core Values. This involved everyone in discussion, reflection and prayer about the Values and Mission of our Catholic school. There was a calling to all to re-commit to our purpose and to work together to understand our roles and responsibilities as part of Our Lady's



Our Mission Statement is:



"Learning and loving together; we grow with Jesus"

Our Mission is represented by this design. As with the statement itself, the logo was developed by all stakeholders, with the children in particular providing the symbolic ideas of **growth – the tree, love – the hearts** and **Christ – the Cross**

The Core Values that provide the foundation for that Mission are:

'Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord' Proverbs' 19:17 **Kind**

'Love God and love people' Matthew 22:36-40 **Loving**

'You can always turn to the Lord when times are tough' Psalms 9:9-10 **Safe**

'Forgive and you will be forgiven' Luke 6:37 **Forgiving**

'I am the way, the truth, the life' John 14:6 **Honest**

'Rejoice always' Thessalonians 5-16 **Positive**

'Lord, your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve' Matthew 4:1-11 **Respect**

'Grow in the grace and knowledge of Saviour Jesus Christ' 2 Peter 3-18 **Nurturing**

Nurture

The School's six nurturing principles sum up our practice and theory. They underpin the context, organisation and curriculum.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. the importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language as a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

At Our Lady's, we aim for the stars! Children who attend less, have poor attendance tend to achieve less. The majority of pupils at Our Lady's have brilliant attendance. As a school we aim for 97%. We strive to maximise each child's attendance as we can only directly influence a child's education if they are in school. Please help us to help you support your child, by bringing them into school, communicating with us, telling us about any ongoing issues and making sure that they are here on time.

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance and punctuality is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of pupils.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.'

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DfE Nov 2016

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parent/carer to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

In response to this we aim to:

- To establish and sustain improved levels of attendance above 97%.
- To ensure that registers are completed accurately, consistently and reliably and that analysis of attendance data is used to provide an effective monitoring system and to inform practice and target resources.
- To identify pupils and groups of pupils whose absence or lateness is giving cause for concern and target resources to work toward the resolution of any difficulties being experienced.
- To reduce the percentage of persistent absentees (attendance 90% and below).
- To promote an effective whole-school approach to the management of attendance where each member of the school community, including staff, governors, parents and pupils are aware of their roles and responsibilities and makes an effective contribution.
- To establish working partnerships with parents, other support agencies and the wider community to address attendance issues.
- To ensure that policy and procedures on attendance and punctuality are effective and applied consistently in practice.

Learning and loving together; we grow with Jesus

Contact Details

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:

Name Mr A Cregan

Contact Details: 01942 832299 enquiries@admin.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Name Mrs T Ward

Contact Details 01942 832299 enquiries@admin.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk

We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place regarding promoting attendance and would encourage parents to contact school as soon as possible if they have any concerns about their child.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

At Our Lady's R.C. Primary School, we aim to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality in a positive way.

We have best class attendance that is reported to the children in our weekly assembly. We also monitor lateness and the class with the least late marks for that week will receive an additional 5 minutes break time.

Teachers are required by law to take an attendance register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session.

Staff and pupils should regard registrations as an integral part of the school day and an opportunity to greet each other in a polite and appropriate manner.

We ask that parents/carers ensure their children arrive on time for registration.

Where children are late or absent, a good and honest explanation must be offered by the parent/carer. Only a school can authorise an absence. If your child is ill or cannot go to school for some reason, you need to contact the school by telephone no later than 9.30am and/or by letter to tell them. You can also email the school if preferred at enquiries@admin.aspullourladys.wigan.sch.uk. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

The school will attempt to contact parents/carers by phone on the morning of the first absence if no contact has been made by 9.30am, to seek an explanation for the absence. In light of the Coroner's report (case Oct 2016 – see attendance file), in cases where the pupil (or parent/carer) might be particularly vulnerable,

the school will send members of staff to the home address (SLT and another) when contact cannot be made.

Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may be unauthorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments e.g. a slight cold, is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped appointment card, prescription or medicine bottle which must be shown to a member of the school office.

48 Hour Sickness Rule

From time to time children are sick (vomit) either at home or at school. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish between the causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or Diarrhoea.

In the Health Protection Agency document, "Guidelines for the Control of Infection and Communicable Disease in School and Early Years Settings", the guidance is:

Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours. We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting.

Thank you for your understanding with this. Further guidance on infection control may be found following the links below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/exclusion-table>

There are only a few valid reasons why your child should be absent. If your child has been away from school without you giving any reason, the school will contact you to find out why. This may be by phone or letter or an invitation to a meeting in school. If we cannot get a reason or gain contact with you, this will be marked down as an unauthorised absence and is also a safeguarding concern. We will then contact Wigan Children's safeguarding Hub (CSH) and then the 'Duty Team' at Social Services, if we feel this is necessary, and may request an official welfare check. Please ensure your contact details are always up to date to avoid this situation.

In cases where punctuality or absence is a concern, we will look to work in partnership with parents/carers to identify reasons for the poor attendance and to support the family until attendance improves.

Good attendance will be encouraged and recognised by all staff. We will be introducing a traffic light system to help track, support and celebrate great attendance. Letters will be sent home termly indicating your child's percentage of attendance as follows:

- Red: 90% and under
- Amber: 90.1 – 96.9%
- Green: 97 – 100%

Monitoring attendance

Our Lady's school will:

- Monitor attendance daily and make immediate contact with families to understand absence.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Persistent & Severe Absence (PA)

From the beginning of the academic year 2015/16 the government reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. This now means that a pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10 per cent or more of their own possible sessions, rather than if they reach a standard of threshold of absence sessions. A guide to Absence Statistics DfE May 2016.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Our Lady's school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Effect on Pupils and Families

For pupils that are on roll at the start of the academic year, (therefore expected to attend 190 days 380 sessions) who have missed 38 sessions (19 school days) at any point during that year, will be classified as a PA pupil.

To prevent pupils from falling into this category, the school Attendance and Punctuality manager tracks and monitors pupil's attendance on a fortnightly basis. Pupils are closely monitored and appropriate interventions will be made. This could include letters, phone call, home visits and meetings in school.

Please see Persistent Absence Flowchart appendix.. and Attendance letters in appendix

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
 - (b) To any special educational needs he / she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Section 444 (1) and (1A) state;

(1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent/carer is guilty of an offence.

(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent/carer know that their child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Expectations and procedures for the Early Years

At Our Lady's R.C. Primary School all children under the age of 5 are included and expected to follow the school attendance and punctuality policy. Regular attendance and punctuality for under 5's is essential if children are to achieve their full potential and build solid foundations for a successful learning journey throughout school.

We expect pupils who are under 5 and have a place at School to attend on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance or punctuality falls below the school target of 97% and the school has not received any reasonable explanation from parents/carers regarding their child's absence, normal school attendance procedures and interventions will follow.

Punctuality

Lateness can be very disruptive both for the child who is late and for his/her peers. It impacts on both their social interaction and learning. When a child arrives late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of their academic ability.

The school gates open at 8.30am and close at 8.55am, the time that school day starts. After this time children will need to come into school via the main entrance and be registered by a member of the office staff.

Registration is at 8.55am. The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at this time. Entries into school after 8.55am and up to 9.30am will be marked in the register as 'Late' (L). Any pupil who is arriving late on a regular basis, will be followed up with the appropriate intervention. This could include letters, phone calls, home visits and meetings in school.

Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked in the registers as an 'unauthorised late' (U). Unauthorised lates are classed as an absence and could result in an Education Penalty Notice.

Parents are expected to collect their child at 3.35pm.

Please see Punctuality letters in appendix 3

Holiday in term time

A Head Teacher may not grant any holiday during term time unless it is deemed that there are exceptional circumstances.

The Head Teacher will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request a holiday in term time, they must complete the relevant form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for an Education Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid

Religious observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance.

Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and;
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify the school in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

Enforced school closure

If Our Lady's RC Primary School was forced to close for a period, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. In such circumstances, children are expected to engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

Education Penalty Notices (EPN)

Parents/carers should be aware that Our Lady's RC Primary School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks with a view to issuing an Education Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Education Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The penalty is £80 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

In Summary

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period

- *10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance*
- *20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence*
- *persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration*

This also includes leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made; truancy, parentally-controlled absence, persistent lateness and leave taken after a prior request has been made and parents/carers have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the leave is taken regardless of this advice.

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties please contact Our Lady's and ask for support.

Children Missing Education

Schools have safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

Where a child has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Please refer to Wigan Children Missing Education Policy

How will 'Good Attendance' be encouraged?

- Accurate, consistent registration and prompt follow up
- Praise from the Headteacher for good/improved attendance
- Welcoming poor attenders back into class in a positive manner
- Informing parents/carers of measures to improve attendance and celebrations of success e.g. letter home, newsletter

Early Help

Intervening early can be critical to achieving positive outcomes for children. The Children Act (2004) states our Statutory Duty to co-operate, it emphasises the need for Local Authorities and relevant partners to work together to meet children's needs. Early Help Assessment is Wigan's response to this statutory duty to co-operate and it replaces the CAF process.

Wigan Children's Safeguarding Hub is responsible for monitoring and promotion of the Early Help Framework on behalf of WCSB. All children should have their needs assessed holistically and if receiving support over and above the universal provision, this is to be recorded and co-ordinated using the Early Help Framework. This is detailed with the Wigan Children Safeguarding Board Threshold of Need Document. For further information contact CSH 01942 486262.

The Early Help process allows professionals to work with families to identify children's needs at a very early stage. It is designed to draw out the strengths and areas for development within a family. Following an assessment, an action plan is developed then reviewed on a regular basis until outcomes have been achieved.

School will use the Early Help process where a family needs a further support plan following initial intervention – we may also refer to other agencies i.e. Startwell for additional targeted support.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing board.

In the occurrence of an unprecedented situation, temporary changes of this attendance policy may be implemented. The changes may be influenced by scientific guidance, government policy or school risk assessments which may take one of many forms. The plan for school attendance will be shared with parents when required. This will be communicated via social media, letters and emails or other methods that will be deemed appropriate at the time.

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Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
K	Attending Education provision arranged the LA
B	Attending any other approved educational activity (approved by the LA)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registered
E	Excluded
G	Unauthorised holiday
H	Authorised holiday
I	Unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).
J1	Interview
L	Late arrival
M	Medical/Dental appointment
N	No reason of absence yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Sporting Activity
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after registration has closed)
V	Educational trip or visit
X	Not compulsory
W	Work Experience
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All pupils should attend

Appendix 2: Attendance and absence data

The tables below equate percentage attendance to time missed from school.

Table 1: Attendance over one whole school year for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Days
100%	0
98%	Less than 4 days / 8 sessions
97%	Less than 5 days / 10 sessions (school target)
95%	Less than 10 days / 20 sessions
90%	20 days / 40 sessions
85%	27 ½ days / 55 sessions
80%	37 ½ days / 75 sessions

Table 2: Attendance over 5 years for each pupil

Attendance	Missed Weeks
85-90%	19 weeks – ½ year absence from school
80%	38 weeks = 1 full year absence from school

What does ‘percentage attendance’ mean?

Parents/carers should be advised that the Government have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 90% and below as ‘Persistent Absent’ pupils (PA). The table below shows the learning time lost against percentage attendance figures.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days Missed	Equivalent Sessions Missed	Equivalent Weeks missed	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 days	18 sessions	1.4 weeks	45 lessons
90%	19 days	38 sessions	3.4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	58 sessions	5.4 weeks	145 lessons
80%	36 days	72 sessions	7.1 weeks	180 lessons
75%	48 days	96 sessions	9.3 weeks	240 lessons

As of May 2022, the Department for Education have categorised those pupils who have attendance of 50% and below as 'Severely Absent' pupils. The Department for Education advise for all pupils who fall within this category to have a robust multi-agency plan and approach in place to support.

Appendix 3 – CME Referral Form



CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION REFERRAL & CHECKLIST

As outlined in the statutory guidance for Local Authorities 'Children Missing from Education' are children of compulsory school age who are not a registered pupil at a school or are not receiving suitable education other if they are not registered at a school.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days without authorisation the school and the local authority have a responsibility to jointly make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. The appropriate completion of this checklist ensures that the Local Authority and school have fulfilled this responsibility.

It is school's responsibility to follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner and every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. If you require advice and guidance, please contact the Children Missing Education inbox CME@wigan.gov.uk. Where there are concerns in relation to safeguarding or child protection issues contact the Children First Partnership Hub on 01942 828300.

It is important that one checklist is completed for each child within the family, please do not include all children on one.

During the first 10 days of absence (reason unknown), school must complete this referral form and checklist. Once completed if the child's whereabouts remains unknown, please make a referral to the Children Missing Education CME@wigan.gov.uk within 5 days or earlier if all checks have been completed.

At any point if you feel a child is at risk of significant harm, FGM, human trafficking or sexual exploitation refer immediately to social care please contact 01942 828300

Please note that if the child is residing or located in the Wigan Borough, they are not a CME and should not be removed from school roll. Policies in relation to school attendance should be followed in these cases.

CHILD'S INFORMATION:

Child's Name:		DOB:
Child's Address:		
Previous Address: (if known)		
School:		
Parent/carer's names:		
Parent/carer's address:		
Contact names & numbers: (include emergency)		
Any known siblings & school:		

<u>Name of Member of staff completing form</u>			
<u>School checklist</u>	<u>Dates/Times</u>	<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>Name</u>
School to attempt to contact parent on first day of absence. This includes Truancy Call, First Day calling, Text, Email, all emergency contacts. Please detail all contact methods - whether a message was left, if the phone is working, is there an international dialling tone.			
School to check possible whereabouts with staff and pupils? This should include checking with family friends, all staff members, the child's friends, social media Contact all emergency contact numbers you hold in school.			
Visit to address(es) by school. Leave card if no answer Does the property look empty? Is someone at home but not answering the door?			

NB if school policy does not permit home visit a police welfare check to be requested			
Contact made with involved agencies within 5 working days (Social Care, EMAS team, School Nurse etc)			
Contact made with agencies to understand when they last had contact/saw the child (no consent needed) - Social care - school nurse (when did health have any contact with the child)			
School to contact the new school or Local Authority the child is believed to have moved to? What were the outcomes? https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council			
NB – Has the child been seen? State when & by whom If not seen, what further action has been taken? (Refer to CME Policy Doc for advice)			

Reason for CME checks:	
Any other agencies involved:	
Known vulnerability/risk factors Do you feel this child is at risk of harm or neglect Y/N please provide detail:	
Is this child Gypsy Roma Traveller? Y/N	
Is this child parents service personnel? Y/N	
Has this child had any Missing from home episodes? Y/N	
Is this child known to the Youth Justice System? Y/N	
Does this child have any SEN/learning needs? Y/N	
Are there any other vulnerabilities you are aware of? Please provide detail;	
Date:	

All boxes must be completed, of not relevant please enter N/A

ALL BOXES MUST BE COMPLETED, IF NOT RELEVANT PLEASE ENTER N/A

Please submit this referral to CME@wigan.gov.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE LAW REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations will come into effect from 19 August 2024, and we wanted to bring this to your attention now, as it will affect when penalty notices are issued in Wigan.

In line with the [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (publishing.service.gov.uk), Wigan Council will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate, and parents/carers are encouraged to communicate with the school should any support be required to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

What are the changes?

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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent 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.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

We would like to thank parents and carers for their support in making sure that children do not miss any learning time.

FAQs

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.

Who can be issued with a penalty notice?

- Each parent can receive a fine for each child who has had unauthorised absence from school.
- In education law, anyone who lives with a child and who has day-to-day care of the child is also considered to be a parent whether they are the biological parent or not. For example, this will include step-parents and partners.

Do the new rules only apply to holidays during term time?

- No, it applies to all unauthorised absence from school including holidays. Unauthorised absence includes other absence that has not been agreed such as truancy, arriving late after the register has closed and failing to provide reasons for absence.

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.