

2 September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Attendance Update – Penalty Notices

We hope you have had an enjoyable summer break. As you may know, every child of compulsory school age has the right to an education that meets their needs, and it is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure their child receives this education. Regular attendance is crucial for your child's success, contributing significantly to their academic progress, well-being, and future opportunities.

I would like to inform you about important updates to the rules regarding school attendance and term-time holidays. The Department for Education has recently strengthened the laws surrounding school attendance, and new mandatory guidance is now in place for all schools nationally. We kindly ask you to review the following information carefully, especially if you have any plans for holidays during term time.

From September 2024, schools are required to consider issuing a Penalty Notice if a pupil has **10 sessions (equivalent to five days) of unauthorised absence** within a rolling period of **10 school weeks**. A session refers to either a morning or afternoon period of the school day. The 10 sessions may accumulate through any combination of unauthorised absences, whether they occur within the same term or span across different terms or school years. It's important to note that an **unauthorised session also includes students that are more than 30 minutes late to school**.

Under the new framework, if a child misses 10 or more sessions due to unauthorised absences within a 10 week period, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. The fine will be £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days or £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid, legal action may be pursued.

Additionally, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, with the second notice carrying a charge of £160 per parent, per child. Any further offences within this timeframe may lead to legal action and prosecution, which could have long-term implications.

Key information

Penalty Notices will be issued for	<p>Term time leave: Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more days within a 10 week period.</p> <p>10 Sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period: A penalty notice may be considered/issued when a child has had 10 sessions* of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week period.</p> <p><i>*Please note there are 2 Sessions per day AM/PM</i></p>
Per Parent, Per Child	<p>Penalty Notice Fines will continue to be issued per parent, per child.</p> <p>For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines (£960).</p>
First Offence	<p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term Time Holiday and / or irregular School Attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged by the local authority at:</p> <p>£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days** of the issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days</p> <p><i>**Unpaid Penalty Notice's after 28 days may result in parental prosecution</i></p>
Second Offence (within 3 years of the first offence)	<p>Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first notice, the second penalty notice will be charged by the local authority at:</p> <p>£160 if paid within 28 days (no reduced fee for paying early)</p> <p><i>**Unpaid Penalty Notice's after 28 days may result in parental prosecution</i></p>



Third Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

On the third time that an offence is committed for either a Term Time Holiday and / or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure.

If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine of up to **£2500**.

We at Dixons are deeply committed to your child's attendance because we know that attending school is vital for their success and future prospects. We understand that some families may face challenges in maintaining regular attendance, and we are here to support you in overcoming these difficulties.

Please remember that term-time holiday requests will not be authorised.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with you to prevent these situations from arising. Please ensure that you stay in contact with the school, provide valid reasons for any absences, and take advantage of the support we offer. Together, we can ensure the best possible outcomes for your child and their future.

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please contact the academy by 8am on each day of absence. To speak to the attendance team please call 01274 089900 and select Option 1.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation and we look forward to your child returning to school this week.

Yours faithfully

Yours sincerely
Francesca Hitch
Principal

