

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following a recent attendance review, we are pleased to inform you that your child's school clearly recognises the importance of excellent attendance and has robust systems in place to support and challenge attendance concerns.

However, the review did identify an increasing trend in term-time holiday requests during the previous academic year. This is concerning and requires further monitoring. This letter therefore serves as a formal reminder of your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

Term-time holiday absences will *not* be authorised by the school except under exceptional circumstances. Taking unauthorised leave may mean you are guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. The maximum penalty for these offences is a fine of £2,500, 3 months' imprisonment, or both. Alternatively, the Local Authority/school may choose to issue a Section 444A Fixed Penalty Notice instead of prosecuting for these offences.

Currently, the amount of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 if paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay a penalty notice will result in prosecution except in limited circumstances.

For clarity, a first offence will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. If a second offence occurs within a three-year period, the amount increases to £160 per parent, per child. These amounts are set nationally and apply regardless of the reason for the unauthorised term-time leave. The Local Authority can issue **no more than two fixed penalty notices per parent within a three-year period.** A **third offence within three years will automatically result in prosecution**, not another penalty notice.

The Local Authority also retains full discretion to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for any period of unauthorised leave taken during term time, regardless of the length of the absence in line with statutory guidance and the Code of Conduct. Even short absences can significantly impact progress and may meet the threshold for enforcement.

We strongly advise all parents and carers to read the Local Authority's **Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices** so that they fully understand **how and why** Fixed Penalty Notices are issued. The document can be accessed here:

[Code of Conduct for penalty notices \(PDF, 216KB\)](#)

The situation will continue to be reviewed regularly, and we ask you to give your full cooperation to your school's staff, who work hard to ensure that your child receives an excellent education.

Yours sincerely,

Access to Education Team

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