

Important information for parents / carers regarding increased penalty fines for unauthorised absence for holidays in term time and other changes.

As parents / carers will be aware there is a great deal of focus on improving school attendance nationally.

The government has announced amendments to the law through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 which involve changes to issuing penalty notices for leave in term time and will come into effect **from 19th August 2024**.

These changes are significant and we would urge all parents / carers to take notice of them and the implication if pupils take unauthorised absence for holidays.

Two penalty notice limit in a three-year period

The number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child to 2 within a 3-year period.

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19th August 2024.

The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

National threshold for issuing penalty notices

Parents may have heard about the new national threshold for issuing penalty notices which has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

However, if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

For example - where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

We would urge all parents to be aware of these changes and the implications for significantly increased penalty fines if pupils are absent from school during term time for holidays or other unauthorised reasons.

We will be updating our policy in line with the changes in the law from 19th August with a revised version uploaded to the academy website during Autumn term 2024.