Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools.

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, is:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.
- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any unauthorised absence.
- For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold.
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school.
- For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent/carer receiving 3 separate fines.

Definition of Parent

- Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that, in relation to a child or young person, a 'parent' includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility for or care of the child.
- Parent refers to a person who typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore 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 the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court:

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.
- Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'

Maple Grove Primary School – Application for leave of absence from school during term time.

Dear Headteacher,

I request permission for a leave of absence for my child, a pupil registered at your school, for the reasons detailed below (further information can be attached if required).

Pupils Full Name:	Year Group:
Pupils Date of Birth:	

First date of absence:	Last day of Absence:
Return date to school:	Number of school days absent:

Please be aware, as per our school's attendance policy and the Hertfordshire published Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the headteacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if:

1. An application has been made in advance by the person the child typically lives with.
2. There are exceptional circumstances.

Please also note that if, on occasions, circumstances are deemed exceptional by the headteacher, the duration your child is permitted to be away from school may only be determined by the headteacher.

The reason for the request including why you believe your circumstances to be exceptional. (Further details may be attached to this form)

If you have a child/ren at another school/s, please details their name/s and which school/s they attend below: Pupil name, name of school and school telephone number:

Full name of the person making the request (note the request must be made by a parent who the pupil typically lives with):	
Relationship to Child:	
Signature:	Date:

This form will be reviewed by the headteacher, and the outcome will be stated below, the school office will notify you of the outcome.

Authorised:	**Unauthorised:**	**Partially Authorised:**

No of days authorised	**No of days unauthorised**

Signed:	**Mrs Woodcock, Headteacher**