



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

3 July 2024

Our reference: CS/EI/IAE/SW

Dear Parent

Working together to improve school attendance – National Framework for penalty notices

As you are aware, it is very important that your child attends school every day, on time, if they are able to do so. Regular attendance helps children to get the most out of their school experience, including their achievement, wellbeing and wider life chances. There are only a few circumstances in which a child is able to miss school, such as illness or if permission has been given because of an exceptional circumstance.

If your child misses school without a good reason, the local authority can intervene and you may be issued with a fine. From September 2024, the Department for Education has introduced a new national framework which means that the same rules apply to all schools and local authorities when considering whether to issue a fine. Under the new framework, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child misses 10 or more sessions (five days) for unauthorised reasons. In many cases, schools and local authorities will offer support to try to improve your child's attendance first, but if this is not effective, or the absence is for an unauthorised holiday in term time, you could be issued with a fine.

From August 2024 the amount of the fine is increasing to £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid within 28 days. If a second fine is issued for the same child within a three year period the amount will be £160.

The number of fines you can receive for each child is capped at two within a three year period from the date of the first fine. If this limit is reached, other action, such as a parenting order or prosecution, will be considered. Fines are issued separately to each parent.

Please see attached sheet with details of the National Framework for fixed penalty notices.

I hope this clarifies the legislation that schools and the local authority are required to follow in relation to unauthorised absence in term time.

Yours sincerely

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CHANGES TO FINES FOR TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

With the introduction of the new National Framework for penalty notices, the following changes will come into force for penalty notice fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools **after 19 August 2024**.

National threshold

There will be a single, consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example: a five day holiday 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 from school.

For example: three siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving three separate fines.

First offence

The first time a penalty notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday, the fine amount will be:

**£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days,
increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.**

Second offence (within three years)

The second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.

Third offence and any further offences (within three years)

The third time an offence is committed, a penalty notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. **This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court.**

Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months.