

# Lancasterian Primary School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Version No.	Date	Approved by	Review Frequency	Review Date
2	Updated September 2020	Governors	2 Years	September 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Lancasterian Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full time and appropriate education, which will enable them to achieve their potential. The school will provide a welcoming and safe environment, where all members of the school community can be socially included and be active members of the school community. For a child to reach their full educational achievement and take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered a high level of school attendance is essential, therefore all school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are key for high attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of **100%** attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. The school will establish a range of effective strategies to acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and punctuality and to support and challenge those pupils and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are responsible for making sure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

While the parent/carer is primarily responsible for ensuring their school-registered child attends regularly, where school attendance problems occur, the key to successfully resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the pupil, parent, school and local authority.

## 1. AIMS OF THE POLICY

These are the attendance bands.

**GREEN Band = 96% to 100%**

**AMBER Band = 93% to 95.9%**

**RED Band = 91% to 92.9%**

**BLUE Band = 90.9% and below persistent absentee**

The Overall School Attendance Target for the whole year is **96% and above**.

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher, administrative assistant or pastoral care manager any problems that prevent them from attending school

**Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 96%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Please contact the following member of staff with any concerns you may have:

Ms Anna Kupczyk **Administrative Assistant**

Mrs Kamelia Johnson **Pastoral Care Manager/Safeguarding Lead**

## **2. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. There are two attendance sessions everyday AM and PM, therefore missing school for a whole day counts as two absences.

**Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:**

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children, will help prevent your child missing school by:

- Contacting the school on every day of absence
- Supporting the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Discussing any problems, they may have at school - inform their class teacher.
- Not allowing them to have time away from school for minor ailments.
- Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays, helping to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school.
- Lack of sleep. If your child has been ill in the night and has had broken sleep and absolutely cannot attend in the morning, please consider sending them into school in the afternoon. Your child may feel better and they will have the chance to catch up on the learning.

**Responsibilities of Pupils:**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive to school on time.
- Take responsibility for signing in at the Main Office if they are late.

#### **Responsibilities of Staff:**

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the pastoral care manager on matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

#### **Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Lead:**

- The Pastoral Care Manager will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and the data analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

### **3. PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. Schools must legally take an attendance register twice a day. The first mark is 8.30 am (Year 6), 8.50am (Rec), 8.55am (KS1) and 9.00am (KS2). The second mark is in the afternoon. Any absences will be recorded with a specific code depending on the type of absence. Absences fall into two main categories: **Authorised Absence:** When the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences **cannot** be authorised. **Unauthorised Absence:** When the school has not received a reason for absence, or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent/carers request.

Absence from school can only be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness which prevents attendance
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Bereavement of a member of the close family

Absences that the school will not authorise include:

- sickness of a parent, or other family member
- inadequate clothing for school
- child being used as a carer
- problems with transport

- non-urgent medical treatment
- school refusal or truancy
- days off for birthdays, shopping trips
- family holiday

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence, they have been on holiday.

### **What to do if my child is absent?**

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. Therefore, information about the reason for any absence is always required.

#### **First Day Absence:**

- In the case of absence parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of absence, and all subsequent days of absence.
- Please make this phone call, text or email as early as possible or by **9.15am** on **Tel: 020 8808 8088** and select option **2** from the menu to report an absence or Text message to **Tel: 07860030407** (please note this number does not accept phone calls) or Email to [admin@lancs-pri.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:admin@lancs-pri.haringey.sch.uk) (only to be used for absence reporting and only if we have your email address registered on the system with us).
- If we do not receive a reason for absence, you will receive a text message reminding you **to reply by text message, email, or telephone** to the school to provide us with the reason for your child's absence.
- It would also be very helpful if you could send your child back to school with a note clearly stating their reason for absence. For prolonged absence, medical reasons are needed to support illness. Medical evidence can be provided as an appointment card, hospital letters, prescriptions or medicine packets.

#### **Third Day Absence:**

- If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you, any of the named parent/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Haringey's Local Authority.
- We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family.

#### **Ten Day's Absence:**

- We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days.
- If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer Haringey Education Welfare Service will be notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'.

- Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number.

#### **Continued or Persistent Absence:**

- Schools have been informed that from as of September 2015 the Government will reduce the current persistent absence threshold from 85 % to 90%. If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as persistent absentees. This is attendance **90.9%** and below.

#### **Attendance Absence Support Process**

- If a pupil's attendance falls below **96%**, parents will be informed. This will be an initial letter to raise your awareness and will ask that you inform the school of any concerns you may have at this early stage.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below **94%** parents will be invited in for a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for poor attendance.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below **92%** parents will be asked to attend an attendance clinic with the Pastoral Care Manager and the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.
- Attendance that falls below **90%** will be formally referred to Haringey's Education Welfare Officer.

**Parents should not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school. The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher. A note or telephone call does not automatically entitle an absence to be authorised. In the case of illness, the school has a right to request further information if necessary.**

## **4. PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES DURING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- Parents/carers duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- The ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

#### **Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)**

School attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term 2020, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Where children are unable to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised. In line with the Secretary of State's expectations parent/carers will not be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

## **Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ could apply**

In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
- If someone in the pupil’s household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, parents/carers must inform school immediately about the outcome of a test. We do not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting pupils or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

- Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).

### **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

- Parents/Carers should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK.

#### **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school.
- School will contact parents/carers of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.

#### **Local lockdown**

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. We will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' pupils will not be penalised and the registers will be updated to reflect this.

#### **Remote education**

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we will offer them access to remote education. We will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity.

### **5. STRATEGIES USED BY THE SCHOOL TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

#### **Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Haringey's Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct states that Schools or Haringey's Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student has been:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes G, U, or O on the register)
- Persistently late (coded 'U') for up to 10 sessions (5 days) after the register has closed.
- Persistently late before the close of the register (coded 'L') but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (coded 'O') and where the threshold of 10 sessions (5 days) has been met.
- Parents/Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools' attendance policy and website.
- The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.
- For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Haringey's Education Welfare Service will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. N.B: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.
- A Penalty Notice is a fine imposed on parents as an alternative to prosecution, of £60 payable **within** 28 days of the penalty notice being posted.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the Penalty is automatically increased to £120. It does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice enables the parent/carer to discharge the potential liability for prosecution and subsequent conviction. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

Penalties may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period of or permanent exclusion. The parents/carers must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

### **Non-Payment of Penalty Notice**

If the fine remains unpaid the Haringey Education Welfare Service will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves and are paid directly to the local authority. Parents/carers may also be prosecuted in court by the Local Authority, in accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to secure their child's regular attendance to school. The current maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child, and/or a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

### **My Child Has A Dentist, Doctor Appointment or Music Exam etc. What Should I Do?**

Please try to make appointments out of school hours but if this is not possible, your child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Taking a whole day off school for a dental/medical appointment is not acceptable and will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

### **I Need to Take My Child Out of School for Another Reason. What Should I Do?**



Please write a brief letter of explanation to the Pastoral Care Manager and send this to the School Office. We realise that you may need to ask for permission at very short notice, but please make every effort to contact us in advance. All requests for pupil's being absent from school must come through the main school office.

### **Can I Get Permission to Take My Child On Holiday During Term Time?**

**No Term Time Leave of Absence:** Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on **1 September 2013**. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted”.

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. It is important to note that Head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school, and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised**. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence must apply in writing on the Leave of Absence form that can be obtained from the main school office or from the school website. It must be in advance and before making any travel arrangements. The Leave of Absence form states that the form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parents/carers. If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised and as the parent/carer you may then be issued with a fixed penalty fine, or other legal action by Haringey’s Education Welfare Service.

### **Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the pastoral care manager to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child’s participation in a public performance is recorded as an authorised absence with a C code.

### **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport.**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. They must contact the pastoral care manager to discuss the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

It is however, the discretion of the Head teacher and pastoral care manager whether to authorise this and permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training

sessions are also at the discretionary and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Please contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for several reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

## **6. PUNCTUALITY / LATENESS**

It is important to be on time at the start of each day. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be upsetting for them leading to possible further absence. Reasons that will not be accepted will be reasons such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes

### **School starts promptly at 8.50am for KS2 and 8.55am for KS1 EVERY DAY**

- If your child arrives after **8.55am (KS2) and 9.00am (KS1)** they will receive a "Late before registration closes" mark.
- Students who arrive **after** the register closes at **9.30am** will be marked with an unauthorised absence code 'U' in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence for the whole session. This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late.
- Any student arriving after 8.55am juniors and 9.00am for Infants will be registered on the gate by a member of staff and recorded in the Late Book with an explanation for their lateness.
- If a student arrives after 8.55am and 9.00am with a genuine reason, this will be taken into consideration.  
Each student is treated on an individual basis.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late after 9.15am when the pastoral care manager ends the late gate, should report to the main school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.** For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg: for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day inform the main school office or pastoral care manager. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them present when they return.

### **Punctuality Support Process**

- If a pupil is late **2 times** within half term. A text message will be sent home. This will be an initial text to raise your awareness and will ask that you inform the school of any concerns you may have at this early stage.
- If a pupil is late **5 times** in a half term parents will be sent a letter and will ask that you inform the school of any concerns you may have at this stage and where necessary support offered.
- If a pupil is late **10 times** in a half term or term parents will be invited in for a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for poor punctuality and where necessary support offered.
- If a pupil is late **15 times or more** in a half term, term or academic year parents will be asked to attend an attendance clinic with the pastoral care manager and Haringey's Education Welfare Officer.

Where lateness results in an unauthorised absence being recorded (because a pupil has arrived after 9.30am) the attendance procedures will be followed including the issuing of fixed penalty notices.

# Lancasterian Primary School



A safe and welcoming learning community where:

- we all aim high;
- everyone is included;
- creativity is valued.

King's Road, Tottenham, London, N17 8NN

Tel: 020 88088088 Fax: 020 8880 3319 email: [admin@lancs-pri.haringey.sch.uk](mailto:admin@lancs-pri.haringey.sch.uk)

Head Teacher: Paul Murphy

Deputy Head Teacher: Charlotte Clinton

## APPLICATION TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME (DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES)

Please complete this application form and return it to the school office as soon as possible.

Please note that no leave will be authorised during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances will authorisation be considered and you may be asked to provide evidence. (See leaflet).

**Any unapproved absence may result in fixed penalty being issued by Haringey Council of up to £120.00 per parent or your child being removed from the school roll. This means that after such an absence parents may have to reapply for a school place, should one be available.**

Date:.....

Child's name:..... Class.....

Child's name:..... Class.....

Start date of holiday:..... Date of return to school.....

Reason for absence:

Signature of parent:

Pastoral Care Manager to complete:

Absence authorised / unauthorized

I have read and understood information on Fixed Penalty Notice For Non-Attendance at School.

Parent/Carer's Signature.....Date:.....

## EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

### How can we help?

- Every school has an allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is able to give advice, support and guidance on attendance related matters.
- If your child is in a Haringey Secondary School, the EWO is based at the school, whilst the EWO for any special or primary school is based at the address on this leaflet.
- Working together with the pupil, parent and school staff the EWO will make an assessment of the situation.
- A contract will be drawn up which will include details of support and agreed actions with timescales for improvement.
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved will be clearly defined.
- Referrals to other support agencies will take place as appropriate.

If you would like further advice about Fixed Penalty notices or any issues relating to school attendance please contact:

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE  
London Borough of Haringey  
Professional Development Centre  
Downhills Park Road  
London Borough of Haringey N17 6AR

Tel: 020 8489 3866  
Fax: 020 8489 5997

The Education Welfare Service is committed to helping your child achieve their potential

## HARINGEY EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

### WHEN ARE THEY USED?

Haringey considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs.

Excessive holidays in term time, delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission, parentally condoned absence, lateness after the registers have closed, and overt truancy could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

In every case a pupil will have had a minimum of 20 schools sessions (10 school days) lost to unauthorised absence in a six weeks period before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions.

Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the Authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child's schooling.

### IS A WARNING GIVEN?

Yes, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absence and give you 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warnings of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

### IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

## HOW ARE THEY ISSUED?

By post to your home.

## HOW DO I PAY?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PAY?

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrate's Court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences or custody, depending upon circumstances.

## CAN I BE PROSECUTED IF I PAY THE PENALTY NOTICE BUT MY CHILD IS STILL MISSING SCHOOL?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice - payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.

## CAN I GET HELP IF MY CHILD IS NOT ATTENDING REGULARLY?

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance.

It is very important that you speak with the school or with the Education Welfare Service at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about your child's school attendance.

## WHAT IS THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003?

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

The powers came into force on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

## WHY HAS IT BEEN INTRODUCED?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

## WHAT IS A PENALTY NOTICE?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

Payment within 21 days of receipt of a Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

Please note that each parent will separately be issued a Penalty Notice for each child.

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