

School Attendance Update

National Changes from August 2024

Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to you because the Department for Education (DfE) have introduced some new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) for managing school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for Penalty Notices and amended the law. These changes come into effect from the 19 August 2024 and all schools and LAs across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

A summary of these changes can be found below:

Changes	Details
Support First	Schools putting in place ways of supporting families with school attendance/getting students in to school using a variety of strategies.
Penalty Notices	Schools referring the case to the Local Authority for monitoring and action.
Registration Codes	New codes being introduced, including C codes and T code.

Support first

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. All schools and Local Authorities are expected to promote school attendance and provide support to remove barriers where a pupil/student is struggling to attend school.

This may mean that we raise the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a couple of days off school. By working with you, we can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. By doing this we may identify other underlying issues that are making your child reluctant to attend school and be able to help you and your child. For this to be successful we need parents/carers to continue to work with us.

Where it can be demonstrated that a parent/carer is not fulfilling their parental responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education then the school can consider requesting that the LA take further action. This can be in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution, or other formal interventions.

National Framework for penalty notices

To provide consistency, the Government have introduced a new national framework for when schools and LAs believe that they have exhausted all offers of support and the parent/carer is not engaging with the attempt to improve their child's attendance at school.

The stated threshold for when a school should consider next steps is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support. The school may then decide to refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. **The new costs and process is outlined below:**

First Offence Penalty Notice	£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
Second Offence (within 3 years)	£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years).
Third Offence	Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term Time holidays

Students should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable.

Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are **exceptional circumstances**.

If a request for leave is denied and the pupil/student is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued.

New registration codes

You might find that your child's attendance report looks slightly different next year. **The DfE have amended some of the codes to include numbers as well as letters.** These new codes are to enable schools, LA and the DfE to better understand the reasons for absence.

For example:

Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance (authorised)
Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance

Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
Code T	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The clarification that this code is only designed to be used for families and children of 'no fixed abode' means that requests that the school has been able to authorise for some families in the past will no longer be authorised under the 'T' code if similar requests are made for Leave of Absence after 19th August 2024.

Summary

Full details of all of the changes can be found by visiting the Government webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> .

We appreciate that there are a lot of changes for September and for many of you these will have little or no impact. However, if your child is anxious about attending school, please speak with at least one of the following members of staff: your child's Tutor, our Attendance Officer (Mrs Wood) ewood@anthonygell.co.uk, your child's Pastoral Manager, one of our Family Support Workers, or our Head of Pastoral Care (Mrs Dafforne). These members of staff will assist in looking for ways to help your child to attend school regularly.

Yours Sincerely,



Malcolm Kelly
Headteacher