

# Fixed Penalties for Irregular School Attendance

## What does irregular school attendance mean?

Irregular school attendance is where children have frequent absences from school. These absences may be one day, two days or a few days on a regular basis which mean that children do not complete full weeks of school.

Broken weeks (where a child is absent for part of the school week) mean that children's work is disrupted and they miss parts of sequences of learning.

A school week means any week where there is at least one day where school is open for pupils. Over time, this can have a serious impact on children's academic and social development.

## When do penalties apply?

Where a child has missed a minimum of 10 sessions of school due to unauthorised absence, a penalty for irregular school attendance may apply.

**Each school day is 2 sessions of school, so 10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days.**

**The 10 sessions apply over a rolling period of 10 school weeks.** For example, if your child has unauthorised absence in Week 1, Week 3 and Week 10 of any 10 week period, a fine may apply. The local authority will issue a **Notice to Improve** and this is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage with support to improve attendance.

A Notice to Improve is a set period of time given for an improvement in attendance to be shown. If there is further absence during a Notice to Improve period, a penalty may apply.

Attendance at our school is tracked on a daily, weekly, half termly and rolling ten week basis.



## What constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence?

Authorised absence is where the child is absent due to illness, attends a medical appointment, leave has been granted by the Head Teacher for exceptional circumstances, religious observance.

**Unauthorised absence** applies where the following apply:

- Parents have not contacted school to inform of their child's absence and school have been unable to establish the reason for absence. (O code)
- Pupils arrive after the register closes at 9:20am (U code)
- Unauthorised leave of absence (Holidays G code)
- School have requested medical evidence and this has not been provided (O code)

**Please note that both the above authorised and unauthorised lists are not exhaustive.**



## When do penalties apply?

Fixed penalties can be issued for Irregular attendance and Unauthorised leave of absence (Holidays) For Unauthorised leave of absence (Holidays) Fines will apply per parent per child. Please see our information sheet relating to absence due to holidays.

For Irregular attendance fines will apply per parent in respect of the child who has accumulated 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling ten week period.

A penalty may apply where there is combination of absence due to a holiday and other unauthorised absence. For example, in a ten week rolling period, a child has 3 days unauthorised absence due to a holiday in Week 2, then 1 day unauthorised absence in Week 6 and a further 2 days unauthorised absence in Week 9, a penalty may apply.

The rolling period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

## What are the penalties?

In cases where attendance has not improved following the local authority's notice to improve the following may apply:

The first penalty notice issued to parent/carers in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

## Who can help with issues relating to attendance

We are aware that families can face challenges which impact on school attendance and punctuality.

We are fully committed to supporting families with punctuality and attendance issues to avoid issues developing that lead to parents/carers facing fines or legal interventions.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, require any advice or have questions relating to the national changes relating to financial and legal penalties for school attendance, our Attendance Officer, Colette Williamson, is available to help you.



You may contact Ms Williamson on 01244 323890 or by email: [colettewilliamson@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:colettewilliamson@hooleceprimary.cheshire.sch.uk)