



Stanford in the Vale Primary School
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Dear parent/carer

Re. PENALTY NOTICES FOR TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Stanford in the Vale CE Primary School is committed to ensuring that your child receives the best possible education to best prepare them for the next stage of their life. Each school day is carefully planned, and each lesson informs a wider programme of learning. Therefore, every lesson really does count. Your child is a valued member of our school community and every day missed is a day lost without them.

It is the policy of this school not to authorise absence for holidays during term-time. While advance permission can be given in exceptional circumstances, this is rare and can only be granted by me in my capacity as Head Teacher. Any such request should be addressed to me in writing before the holiday is taken and you should not assume that permission will be granted.

If a term-time holiday is taken without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral may be made to the County Attendance Team. This may result in the issue of an Education Penalty Notice under section 444A Education Act 1996 in respect of each absent child, to each parent/carer. Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution.

The first Penalty Notice is a charge of £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days, the usual consequence is a Magistrates' Court prosecution for the underlying section 444(1) Education Act 1996 offence of failure to secure regular school attendance. A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first notice, and so in cases where the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time another action will be taken instead, which may include the local authority considering prosecution.

If further instances of unauthorised absence occur despite a penalty notice having previously been issued, or if the child's attendance is a wider matter of concern, the local authority may consider prosecution in any event.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Willis
 Head Teacher

Penalty Notices FAQs for parents/carers 2024/2025

Why is attendance important?



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Every day in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance enjoy better wellbeing and achieve better outcomes than those who don't.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school?

Yes. Your child's school is always available to offer support and should be your first step in getting any additional help you may need.

The County Attendance Team can provide help and support directly to the school and as part of a multi-agency plan.

Children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions and those with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional barriers.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools and the local authority will work with parents to offer support to ensure they are able to access education and attend school.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school regularly, and the absences are classed as unauthorised. Such cases may result in a 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 the pupil's attendance.

What are the costs?

From August 19 2024, under the new national penalty notice framework, all schools will be required to consider a penalty notice when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. This means from September 2024 the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent/per child will be capped to two within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached a prosecution may be considered.

If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could be fined of up to £2,500.

Can a penalty notice be paid in instalments?

No. A penalty notice must be paid in full.

Can a penalty notice be appealed?

There is no statutory right of appeal. Once a penalty notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

What happens to the money raised from paid fines?

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

Where can I find more information about penalty notices?

If you have any queries or want further advice the County Attendance Team can be reached on attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk



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