

Changes to Attendance and Absence

August will see the changes to the National Penalty Notice Framework come into force. Specifically, the changes are:

1. A new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for which a penalty notice must be considered. A penalty fine can be issued for any combination of unauthorised absences over a 10 week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.
2. An increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
3. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3 year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3 year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance. This will include a consideration to prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
5. The current penalty notice warning letter used for unauthorised absence (not holiday) will be changed to a *Notice to Improve*.