Fixed Penalty Notices for irregular attendance at school
Important information for parents

1. Overview

Regular school attendance is vital for children to reach their full potential. If your child is absent for any reason, it is important that you communicate fully with the school. However new national guidance is to be implemented from September to manage irregular attendance at school.

Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure their child attends school regularly. They can be used in cases where absence has not been authorised by a head teacher and can be in respect of any unauthorised absence, irrespective of reason.

The notices are used to prevent the need for court action, for example, when support has not been engaged with or is not appropriate (for example, leave of absence during term time).

Changes from 19 August 2024 are shown →

2. Leave

Head Teachers are unable to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances.**

Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation **would not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

3. Absence

A fixed penalty notice may be issued if there are **5 days/10 sessions** of absence in a period of **10 school weeks** where absence has not been authorised.

The days/sessions **do not** need to be consecutive for a notice to be issued and can be several periods of leave over a period of 10 school weeks.

4. Amount

The first penalty notice is **£160** if paid within 28 days, reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice is **£ 160** to be paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued. **Legal action will be taken and a referral made to Court.**

Each penalty is per parent per child. The above applies within a rolling 3-year period.

5. DfE

Local Authority Attendance team: accessandinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk

For further information please see the DfE Working together to improve school attendance document.