

Walton Priory Middle School

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July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Recent updates to school attendance management guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and Staffordshire County Council have been announced. Starting from 19th August this year, revised rules regarding the issuance of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) are in effect. Here are the key points:

The DfE's "Working together to improve School Attendance" document outlines changes in Chapter 6 concerning penalty notices:

- A new limit of two penalty notices per parent per child within a three-year period will apply, starting from the first notice issued after 19th August 2024.
- The penalty for the first notice for term-time leave will increase to £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Subsequent notices within the three-year period will incur a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no early payment reduction. A third notice within this period may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates Court, with potential fines up to £1000 upon conviction.
- Any holidays booked now for after 19th August 2024 will be subject to these rules based on the date of the absence, not the booking date. Non-payment of a penalty notice within the specified period will result in prosecution by the county council.

Regarding the three-year period:

- Notices issued before 19th August 2024 for unauthorised absences will not count towards the three-year limit. However, all notices issued after this date for any unauthorised absence reasons will count, unless withdrawn due to council error.

National threshold and code of conduct:

- A new national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Local authorities retain discretion to issue notices before this threshold in certain cases, such as repeated absences for holidays or family events.
- The DfE will introduce a new code of conduct for issuing penalty notices in August 2024, aligned with these regulations.

As a school, we will update our attendance policy accordingly. If you have any questions, please contact us at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards

A small, light-colored rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature appears to be 'T. Kemp'.

Mr Toby Kemp

Deputy Headteacher