



Frequently Asked Questions about Fixed Penalty Notices and Absence from School:

What can I do if my child is starting to present attendance difficulties?

These difficulties can show themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, inventing illness, missing lessons whilst in school or asking to go home during the school day because of feeling unwell. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should:-

- Talk to the son/daughter to try to ascertain if there are any problems or worries at school on the journey to or from school or at home
- Contact your son/daughter's Head of Key Stage to discuss potential issues
- Seek medical advice if illness keeps repeating

If my child refuses to attend school, can I be held responsible?

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act. In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00.

What do I do if my child is ill?

Telephone the School Reception on (01205) 310505 each morning of your child's illness by 8.30am. If your child experiences a prolonged absence any medical evidence (including prescription, appointment cards etc) would be gratefully received, so we can put in additional support, if necessary.

Do I need to send in a letter about my child's absence?

If you have rung or otherwise contacted the school, then we would not require a note as well.

What does 15% absence look like?

15% absence equals 4.5 days in a 6-week period.

Whose responsibility is it to issue a fixed penalty notice?

It is the Local Authority whose responsibility it is to consider and issue Fixed Penalty Notices. It is at the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher's discretion as to whether they authorise or unauthorised the period of absence requested and then request a FPN. The school uses the services of an Education Welfare Officer to issue all legal warnings on our behalf and may contact the Local Authority to consider a FPN.

Can the school request to issue a FPN for persistent lateness?

The lateness must show as unauthorised absence on the register (U code) and fulfil the requirement of 15% absence (over a 6 week period). 'U' code is marked in the register when the student arrives after the close of registers.

What are exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional circumstances cover a range of reasons distinct to an individual family. Each request for absence should be look at on a case by case basis by the Deputy Head teacher.

Why do you issue fixed penalty notices if parents/carers remove their children for a holiday?

We cannot authorise an avoidable absence which causes harm to the continuity of a child's education. We are aware that holidays in term time are cheaper than those in school holidays and that this can be a motivating factor. The penalty notice therefore attempts to remove this incentive as well as reinforcing the importance of school attendance.

Would I have received a fixed penalty notice if I had lied about the absence?

We expect honesty in our dealings with parents/carers and we are sure parents/carers wish to model this to their children. However, it is also our experience that children will tell their friends of their holiday who inadvertently tell their teachers. The length of absence can also trigger attendance officer investigation, including home visits, leading to the truth of the matter.

Does the school get the money generated by the fine?

No, it goes to the Local Authority.