

EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, was introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations came into effect from 19 August 2024.

In line with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance (applied from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk), Wigan Council will prioritise the 'support first' approach expecting that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is appropriate, and parents/carers are encouraged to communicate with the school should any support be required to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices are requested by schools and academies and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child at the below rates.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10 week period

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

you could receive a Penalty Notice of £80 which will increase to £160 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

If a second penalty fine 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.

If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep

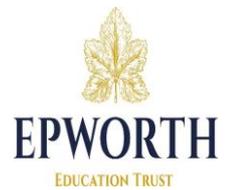
With God, all things are possible – Matthew 19:26



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Westleigh Methodist Primary School



- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties please contact your school and ask for support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Louise Boardman

Headteacher

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