

## Attendance

The law relating to absence seems to be changing all the time. However, all local authorities have a Code of Practice for Attendance which all schools must still follow. For us, this means:

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed, we will have to issue a Penalty Notice where the student has been:

- absent without authorisation for 10 or more half-day sessions in a 10-week period – these do not need to be consecutive; or
- late on 10 or more occasions in any 10 weeks – again, these do not need to be consecutive; or

**We will not normally approve any request for absence where a child's attendance for the previous 12 months is below 95%.**

Attendance during one school year	Equates to days absent	Which is approximately	Which means the number of lessons missed
94%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	95 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	145 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	190 lessons
75%	48 days	10 weeks	240 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	285 lessons
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	335 lessons

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Separate penalty notices are usually issued to both parents.

Please be aware that if a Penalty Notice has previously been issued and this has been ineffective in addressing the absenteeism, the case must be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel (ALP) who will then decide whether to issue a subsequent Penalty Notice or recommend alternative intervention which may include parental prosecution.

### What are "special" and "exceptional" circumstances?

The fact a holiday is cheaper during term time will not be considered as "special" or "exceptional" circumstances. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as "exceptional":

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Ultimately, however, it is for the Headteacher to decide if the circumstances are "special" or "exceptional". Each request for leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis. In deciding whether or not to approve a request, as well as considering the circumstances surrounding the request, the Headteacher is also likely to take into account:

- the age of the student
- the time of the year proposed for the holiday
- the overall attendance pattern of the student and
- the student's stage of education and progress.

*Fact: Hampshire County Council Children's Services Department will always support a headteacher's decision to refuse a request for leave of absence for a family holiday during term time.*

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from the school or visit the Hampshire County Council website.