

# School Attendance Update

## September 2024



The Polesworth School  
ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to you because the Department for Education (DfE) have introduced some new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) for managing school attendance that is now statutory. The full guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_-\\_August\\_2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)

The Government believes, as do we, that parents/carers and school working together is the best way to overcome any barriers to your child attending regularly. However, it is important to note that statutory fines (Attendance Penalty Notices) for parents have been put in place if a pupil is consistently absent from school without valid reason.

**All schools will be required to consider a fine (Attendance Penalty Notice) when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons within a ten week rolling period.** These 10 sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks, or unauthorised absence. The school will consider the reasons for absence and support. **It might be that parents are issued with a Notice to Improve Attendance prior to a fine. If this is not adhered to, then a fine will occur.**

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day. Please find supporting guidance here; [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.

### Attendance Penalty Notices

The new Penalty Notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice, for each child who is absent. For example, 2 parents and 3 children, each parent will receive 3 penalty notices for £160 each, with a family total of £960 in fines.
- The fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- This will be considered your first offence.
- The next time an offence occurs, within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, with no reduction.

- The third time an offence occurs this will be presented to Magistrate's court with no penalty notice issued.

It may be tempting to book a family holiday in term time to save on costs during the cost of living crisis. **However, family holidays in term time are not allowed in law and are very unlikely to be authorised.** Taking children on leave without applying for authorisation may mean the school has to report your child as 'missing' to the local authority and holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively in law. Adding even more absence to the time children have already missed only means that the children miss even more lessons that will not be repeated.

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Notifying the school of leave due to a family emergency does not mean it will be authorised.

**You should also be aware that regulations have come into force to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools.** This means that your child's attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority every day. This will allow the DFE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and see improvement in attendance. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends for example a child reported as ill the same week each year, or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence.

With regards to **punctuality**, we also want to make you aware of the change in guidelines. Our AM register must close at 9.00am. This means that any child that arrives after this time will be marked as unauthorised for the morning session, unless we receive notification from a parent/carer.

It is important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. Schools will consider NHS guidance when making their decision whether to authorise absence due to illness. If a student is absent owing to illness for more than 15 days, the school must inform the local authority so that they can intervene and monitor as they see fit.

The Polesworth School will work in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance. Your efforts, working in partnership with us, will ensure that your child will have the best chance to achieve their academic potential and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. It will also enable your child to:

- access the lessons needed to achieve their expected grades
- maintain friendships and develop new ones
- have access to social and sporting events offered by the school
- explore potential careers
- develop work habits such as good punctuality which are essential to thrive in the world of employment

## How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

With all of these changes the priority is supporting a young person to access school every day. If your child is finding attending school difficult, is feeling anxious about attending school, or needs help to access their education speak to the school, arrange to meet with your child's Head of Year, Pastoral Support Officer or SENDco to discuss the support available for your child.

We hope this information is helpful to you and we wish you and your child/children all the best for the new academic year.

Thank you for working in partnership with us on this matter. Attendance Matters - Every Day Counts.

Kind Regards,