



Knowsley Council

EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES

A Guide for Parents/Carers

September 2024

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good [attendance](#) enjoy better wellbeing and school performance than those who don't.

There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss [school](#), such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance.

However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine.

It's important to acknowledge that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with [special educational needs and disabilities](#) may face additional barriers.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools should have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs.

How much could I be fined if my child misses school?

In the majority of cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence

is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine.

Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council.

However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days**.

This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

HOW IS A PENALTY NOTICE ISSUED?

By post, to your home address.

HOW DO I PAY?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Education Penalty Notice. You cannot pay in part or in instalments.

CAN I APPEAL?

There is no right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but you can discuss with the school/ School Attendance Service when you have received an Education Penalty Notice.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PAY?

You have up to 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice in full. After which the authority has a statutory duty to consider instigating legal proceedings.

If proven, this can result in a range of fines up to £2500 and/or a range of disposals such as parenting orders or community sentences.

What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- 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.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS TRUANTING?

- Talk to them to find out why.
- Try to understand what is happening to your child and help them to resolve the problem.
- Contact the school to discuss the situation and look for solutions

For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers.

This is important not just for your child's learning, but also for their overall wellbeing, wider development and their mental health.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

If you have any queries regarding your child's attendance or you wish to discuss an Education Penalty Notice you have received, then please contact:

**KNOWSLEY COUNCIL
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE
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