



14<sup>th</sup> August, 2024.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**RE: Statutory Guidance from 19th August, 2024: 'Working together to Improve School Attendance'.**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

As you may already be aware, the Government released updated guidance on **School Attendance** via the above publication which **came into effect on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2024**. Several changes have been identified in this guidance including:

- **New absence fine rates (see attached document).**
- Thresholds at which penalties must be considered.
- Requirements to share daily data with the government.
- **New absence codes (see advice below on holidays in term time).**

**Please read the attached information relating to Penalty Notices.** The information below should also be strongly considered if you are planning to apply for an Application for Leave of Absence from Maintained Schools for the purpose of a holiday during term time. The authorised holiday code has been removed from our attendance recording system (Code H). Please be aware of the following points (suggested by the LCC School Attendance Support Team) if a holiday is taken without authorisation (**ONLY granted in situations of exceptional circumstances**):

**Are you thinking of taking your child on holiday in term time?**

**If so, please think carefully...**

- There is no automatic entitlement to any leave in term time therefore parents must seek school's permission before taking their child out of school.
- Schools are **unable** to authorise the absence unless there are **exceptional reasons** for taking the leave in term time.
- School will require parents to fill in a leave request form **prior to booking** any holiday and/or attend a meeting in school.

There may be occasions where, even in exceptional circumstances, school may not agree leave, for example during SATs week or important transitional periods.

**What is the hidden cost of your family holiday? Any financial savings should be weighed up against the impact on your child's education.**

**Reasons why you should not take your child out of school in term time:**

- Evidence shows that even small amounts of absence from school can affect your child's progress and attainment.
- The education of your child could be disrupted both prior to and after any leave, causing them to fall behind and struggling to catch up.
- For every week of school a child misses, they lose 25 hours of education which can never be regained.
- Approximately every 6 weeks your child gets a holiday from school, therefore you should use this time to take your child on holiday.
- If you choose to take your child on holiday in term time without permission, you may be issued with a penalty notice.

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# Morecambe Road School

Strive - Thrive - Achieve



If you have any queries relating to the attached information, **please contact myself directly.** As the Whole School Attendance Lead, I am happy to answer any queries you may have. As you can appreciate, attendance is intrinsically linked to your child's progress and I am sure you will support these changes, which have been instigated by the Department for Education.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs H Andrew

**(Secondary Phase Deputy Head)**

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## Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

### Information for Parents

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period<sup>1</sup>. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

### Absences can have a lasting effect on learning

Missing a week of school means your child will miss around 25 hours of learning

This creates gaps in their knowledge and could mean they will not meet their full potential

<sup>1</sup> A school week is any week in which a school meets at least once.