

September 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Penalty Notices to Address Poor Attendance at School

After careful consideration, our Governing Body have decided to adopt the advised Surrey Policy on pupil attendance, which includes the introduction of Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences. This is not a decision which was taken lightly by our Governing Body. Our first priority is promoting school attendance, and ensuring all children receive the full education to which they are entitled. Long periods of avoidable absence are disruptive to learning and can impact the whole class, and as such the school has a duty to do everything it can to prevent unauthorised absences.

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances :-

1. Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more). **Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body have to judge whether there are exceptional circumstances and may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised. Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent/carer is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance. This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance. If you have any questions or require further support to achieve an improvement, please contact the school or the education welfare officer.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice

The amount payable for a Penalty Notice issued in any of the above circumstances is **£60** if paid within **21** days of receipt of the Notice, rising to **£120** if paid after **21** days but within **28** days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please be aware that each parent is liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absences, for example, if there are two parents and one child, each parent will receive one Penalty Notice. If there are two parents, and two children incur unauthorised absences, each parent will receive two Penalty Notices, which in this case would amount to £120 each if paid within 28 days.

Advice and support is available from an Education Welfare Officer by contacting your local Education Office as follows :

South East Tel: 01737 737777

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or Hannah Pearce, our chair of governors (01306 868165 / chairofgovernors@pcps.uk.)

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs McLaughlin and Mrs Wilson

Mrs E McLaughlin and Mrs J Wilson
Co-Headteachers