



ATTENDANCE POLICY

REVIEWED BY SCHOOL

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Hadfield Infant School.

‘At the heart of the community, Hadfield Infant School gives children the key to their education, unlocking the doors to the wider World.’

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Act, Regulation and Guidance from the Department of Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/Carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s regular attendance and failure to do so in a criminal offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

At Hadfield Infant School, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential.

We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Hadfield Infant School encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that whilst ‘parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly,’ (DfE 1999) we are here to support you in that also.

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

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Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for **all** pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norma and seen to be valued by the school.
- Rise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
- To build strong relationships with families and external agencies to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school so that every child can reach their potential unhindered by unnecessary absence.

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

Definitions

Authorised Absence – An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometime, even if absence is supported by parents, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence – An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Procedures –

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance.

Our attendance officer is Mrs McLoughlin and Mrs Dodd.

The attendance officers will monitor and analyse data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole
- Individual year groups
- Individual pupils
- Demographic groups e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds
- Other groups of pupils e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM
- Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The attendance officers will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a weekly basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes

- Particular days of poor attendance
- Historic trends of attendance and absence
- Barriers to attendance

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support school in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas of improvement and will share practice which has been effective with other schools.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at risk pupils as part of their initial safeguarding training.

The governing body will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools e.g. keeping of registers
- The schools' strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The schools' procedures for multiagency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

The Headteacher will ensure there is dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance office and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure that they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern and know how such concerns should be managed.

Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently
- Modelling good attendance behaviour
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Headteacher – Mrs Dodd

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

Attendance Office and administration staff – Mrs McLoughlin

The attendance officer will be responsible for:

- When a parent has not informed us as to why their child is not in school, will contact the parent to inquire as to why.

- Will collate data and pass this onto the Headteacher
- Will be a pastoral support to parents/carers in the first instance on dropping off children to assist them in any issues they may have.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number
- Updating the school if their details change
- The attendance of their children at school
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Registration

The school doors open at 8.55am and children are expected to be in school by 9.00am, this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. All attendance records are documented using Integris Software. Attendance registers are legal documents, and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late, after close of register, soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9.00am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code – L)

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.20am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code – U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code -M).

Persistent Absence (PA) monitoring

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Looked after children (LAC)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM (Free School Meals)
- Pupils with EAL (English as an additional language)
- Pupils with SEND (Special Educational and Disability Needs)
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use several methods to help support pupils at risk of Persistent Absence to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- Offering ‘soft starts’ and or ‘meet and greet’ in cases where pupils are school refusers or anxious
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be feeling.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress
- Sharing attendance data at all family meetings (two parents evening and end of year report)
- Assessing whether an Educational Health Care (EHC) plan may be appropriate
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence that drop below 80%, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil is at risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school’s duty of care. The school will also bear in mind the continuation of severe PA following intervention may constitute neglect and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

In the case of Persistent Absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to Mrs Dodd. **The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.**

If a pupil's attendance drops below 85%, the Headteacher will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive days, the school will initiate the Child Missing in Education (CME) procedure.

Absences

Parents will be required to contact the school **before the start of the day** on the first day of their child's absence and **every subsequent** day thereafter, giving a clear reason for the absence by explaining what illness or symptoms are present. This is to we can monitor illnesses and viruses that might affect the whole school community.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Attendance Officer will check the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a **safeguarding** requirement, contact the parents of those children by telephone.

The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on an Absence Request Form available from the school office and handed in **two school weeks** before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Please note that new regulations imposed from August 2024 mean that you could be faced with a fine and possible court prosecution if you take your child out of school for longer than five days over a ten-week period. This will be discussed further in the section **National Framework for penalty notices**.

Parents/carers may be issues with a penalty notice or prosecution should leave of **5 days or more** be taken which is **not authorised** by the Headteacher, or where unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold (Attendance code – G)

Performance and activities, including paid work (outside of school but during school hours)

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the Local Authority which authorises the school's absence(s).

Additional arrangements will be made by the school for pupils in engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence. This requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

- For not less than six hours a week; and
- During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period) for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
- On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
- For not more than give hours on any such day.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. The headteacher will not authorise absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 95%. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise for a performance or activity.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

Attendance Intervention

- To ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the school will:
- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- Attend of lead attendance reviews in line with the escalation process
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem
 - Sending letters to parents
 - Having termly reviews
 - Engaging with the Local Authority attendance teams
 - Using fixed penalty notices

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Procedures' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality with rewards in school, however, we will not discriminate against those pupils with medical conditions requiring unavoidable appointments.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain the approach for the child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance.

The school will only accept request from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over a request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parents belong to a community covered by the code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least three weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND and health-related absence

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported in school through our Senior mental health co-ordinator and Mental Health first aiders.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days
- Provide the LA with information about the pupils needs, capabilities and programme of work
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider;

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework

- Using an internal and external specialist
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Small group work or one to one lesson
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of truancy:

- In the first instance, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with parents to determine whether any support can be put in place to prevent further truancy.
- Further instances would then lead to a letter being issued alongside this policy so that parents are aware of their legal obligation in ensuring that their children attend school. Ongoing support will be given by school throughout this time.
- Continued truancy could ultimately lead to a penalty notice being issued
- A penalty notice is issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with inline with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing Children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless accompanied by an adult for a prearranged appointment. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school;

- The member of staff who has noticed the pupil missing will inform the headteacher immediately
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically checked:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - The library
 - The hall and other areas within the school building
 - Outside play area
 - Any outbuildings or forest areas within the grounds
 - Remaining school grounds

Please note that the side gates and top gates are locked throughout the day so that no child should be able to leave the premises.

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be provided
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted
- The missing pupils teacher will complete a report on CPOM's, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

Please note that all points above will be followed if a child goes missing whilst with their parents on school premises.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises. The behaviour policy will be followed accordingly.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Addressing attendance concerns

The school expects at least 95% attendance.

It is important for children to establish good habits early on in their school career and particularly whilst at Infant school, children need to be in school to learn the foundation skills in all subjects – particularly maths, literacy and reading. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they can understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services and the Family support team.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education -parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances i.e. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's level of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer and headteacher will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly.

The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related too the pupil's experiences in school, the attendance officer will work with any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities e.g. children's social care, Family support ream or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised, they may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measure which include the issue of penalty notice fines and other statutory action.

National Framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is **10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code- U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code – G)

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is to be above the National average for attendance and below National average for persistent absence.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and governors.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX 1

**School attendance update 2024/5**

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. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notice and amended the law. These changes come into effect from the 19 August 2024 and all schools and LAs across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

Support first

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. All schools and LAs are expected to promote school attendance and provide support to remove barriers where a pupil is struggling to attend school. This may mean that the school raises the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a couple of days off ill. This is not because they don't believe you. By working with you, schools can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. Schools may identify other underlying issues that are making your child reluctant to attend school and be able to help you and your child.

For this to be successful parents need to work with the school. Where it can be demonstrated that a parent/carer is not fulfilling their parental responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education then the school can consider requesting that the LA take further action. This can be in the form of a penalty notice, prosecution, or the school may suggest other formal interventions.

National Framework for penalty notices

To provide consistency, the Government have introduced a new national framework for when schools and LAs believe that they have exhausted all offers of support and the parent/carer is not engaging with the attempt to improve their child's attendance at school.

The threshold for when a school should consider next steps is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period.

At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support. They may then decide to refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. The new costs and process is outlined below:

First Offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years) -The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term time holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

New registration codes

You might find that your child's attendance report looks slightly different next year. The DfE have amended some of the codes to include numbers as well as letters. These new codes are to enable schools, LA and the DfE to better understand the reasons for absence.

For example:

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance.

The important thing for you as a parent is still the C which means that the absence was authorised.

There is also a new code which has been introduced for pupils who are on the school roll but are temporarily being provided with an alternative education by the local authority, such as a home tutor.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.

Full details of all of the changes can be found by visiting the Government webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Derbyshire County Council will be publishing its updated code of conduct for penalty notices and all the necessary updated information on Education Welfare page in time for the start of the new term in September.

We appreciate that there are a lot of changes for September and for many of you these will have little or no impact. However, if your child is anxious about attending school, please speak with your child's teacher or the attendance/family support workers within the school. They are there to explore what support can be provided to help your child to attend school regularly.

APPENDIX 2

School attendance update September 2024

Attendance categories

- 95 to 100% - as expected
- 91 to 94% - at risk of persistent absence
- 80 to 90% - persistent absence
- 51 to 79% - at risk of severe absence
- Less than or equal to 50% - severe absence

Support first approach

Missing school means children fall behind. This not only impacts on their future achievement, but also adds additional stress and worry as the pupil attempts to catch up. This can affect their mental health and that of their family.

Schools will always try to offer support to remove barriers to attendance before considering any form of legal intervention however they can only do this with the support of parents. If you do not engage with this support the school may feel that they have no choice than to request the Local Authority consider taking legal action against you for failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the below changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines for unauthorised absence after 19th August 2024.

Education Penalty Notices are issued to the parents of statutory school age children and can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school.

• First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

• Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

• Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

Can my child take a holiday in term time?

The simple answer is NO - pupils can only take leave of absence during term time if this is approved in advance by the school. Leave taken without permission may result in a penalty notice and or prosecution.

Appendix 3 – Letter to parents re attendance (one letter per parent)

Private and Confidential

Date

Dear

As you are aware, I am concerned about NAME's school attendance. I have enclosed a copy of HIS/HER attendance printout for your information. Whilst the average attendance for a child of PHASE age is NUMBER % your child's attendance is NUMBER%.

I am obliged to make you aware of your legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance. Under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 a parent is guilty of an offence if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school.

If NAME's attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and HIS/HER absences marked as unauthorised then I will have no option but to refer your case to Derbyshire County Council for consideration of legal action. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine per child, per parent.
- Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £1000.
- Prosecution under s444 (1a) Education Act 1996 where, if convicted, you may be fined up to £2500 and/or a community order or imprisonment.

In order to support you and _____ to improve the situation we would like to offer you a meeting/support package.

I will continue to monitor the situation but if NAME's attendance does not improve then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to ME/NAME, TITLE regarding this issue please do not hesitate to contact me on the number at the top of this page.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Designated attendance lead