

Headteacher - Mrs Nêst Llewelyn-Cook

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 @2gatesprimary

Thursday 11th July 2024

Dear Parent

## **Important - Significant changes to issuing penalty notices for leave in term time**

Please find below important information for parents/carers regarding the statutory introduction of penalty fines for unauthorised absence for holidays in term time and other non-authorised days off school. As parents/carers you will be aware there is a great deal of focus on improving school attendance nationally. The Government has issued new guidance regarding changes to issuing penalty notices for leave in term time.

**These changes are significant and we would urge all parents/carers to take notice of them and the implication if pupils take unauthorised absence for holidays and/or unauthorised absence in school for other reasons.**

The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and will come into effect from the 19 August 2024.

In summary all parents will now be fined for unauthorised absence in term time and these fines will increase over a three-year period.

### **How will it work?**

## **New two-penalty notice limit in a three-year period**

1. A first penalty notice will be issued for leave in term time. This has increased and will now be £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19 August 2024.

2. If a second leave of absence is taken within this three-year period, a second penalty notice will be issued and then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.
3. A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000. PTO....

## National threshold for issuing penalty notices (Other unauthorised leave)

The new national threshold for issuing penalty notices has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This means if your child is off school for an unauthorised reason for any 5 days in a 10 week period then a penalty notice will be issued.

However, if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example - where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking leave for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

We have also been provided with a new template letter to accompany any requests for term time absence. These will replace our existing letters. A new letter has also been issued and will be sent outlining the fining process if it is suspected that a holiday has been taken in term time but concealed.

We would strongly urge all parents to be aware of these Government changes and the implications for the introduction of significantly increased penalty fines if pupils are absent from school during term time for holidays or other unauthorised reasons from next term.

If you would like to read anything further around this, please follow the link to the new statutory guidance:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

Please contact me if you have any questions moving forward.

Kind regards,

*N Llewelyn-Cook*

Mrs N Llewelyn-Cook  
Headteacher