



City of Doncaster Council

Information for Parents

The Department for Education (DFE) will introduce a new National Framework for Penalty Notices, **the following changes will come into force after 19th August 2024**

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice **must** be considered by all schools in England. This threshold increases the amount of the penalty notice and a new national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3- year rolling period.

Penalty Notice (PN) consideration

Penalty notices will be considered for 5 days of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or schools' years.

A Notice to Improve may be sent to the parent/s by the Local Authority on behalf of the school prior to the notice being issued. The notice to improve will note the support that has already been applied and the continued support that is available to the parent and child to improve their attendance. The Notice to Improve will also detail the expected improvements that must be made over an agreed timescale to prevent the Penalty Notice being issued.

Any absence which does not meet the criteria of being 'an exceptional circumstance' will be marked as unauthorised absence and as such you may be at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice. Please be aware that: **Penalty notices will be issued for each parent, for each child that was absence in line with *The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and subsequent amendments) set out how penalty notices for school absence must be used.***

What are the Penalties?

First Offence

the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

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

Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Second Offence

The amount will be: £160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent per child.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS Certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

What must I do?

If you are having difficulties in ensuring your child attends school regularly, you should contact your child's school in the first instance. If you receive a warning letter from your school or City of Doncaster Council about your child attendance you should get in touch with the school as soon as possible, to discuss the reason for your child's absence from school.

You should avoid taking your child out of school for a leave of absence (holiday)

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Every school in Doncaster is supporting the message that school attendance is a high priority. We hope that parents will help us to ensure that all Doncaster children achieve the very highest levels of attendance at school. In the first instance you should contact your child's school who will offer advice and support.

You can also seek advice from the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Service on 01302 736504.

The City of Doncaster Council will prioritise the 'support first' approach in line with the DfE's '**Working together to improve school attendance**' guidance, only resorting to legal enforcement, when necessary. We expect that support will have been offered to families in cases where it is more appropriate. However, Penalty Notices can be issued without a Notice to Improve in cases where support is not appropriate (such as leave of absence in term time i.e. a Holiday)