



IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE LAW REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, was introduced following changes to the law since 19 August 2024, and we wanted to bring this to your attention now, as it will affect when penalty notices are issued in England.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
3. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
4. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Please see FAQs below with more information about how the new rules may affect you.

We would like to thank parents and carers for their support in making sure that children do not miss any valuable learning time. If you are worried about your child's attendance please contact: The School Office and speak to Mrs Rauf.

Yours faithfully,

Kind regards,

The School Office

Roxbourne Primary School
Torbay Road
Harrow
HA2 9QF



FAQs

If I have been issued with a penalty notice before 19 August 2024, will this be counted if I am issued with another penalty notice from September onwards?

No, the new limits come into effect from 19 August 2024.

Who can be issued with a penalty notice?

Each parent can receive a fine for each child who has had unauthorised absence from school.

In education law, anyone who lives with a child and who has day-to-day care of the child is also considered to be a parent whether they are the biological parent or not. For example, this will include stepparents and partners.

Do the new rules only apply to holidays during term time?

No, it applies to all unauthorised absence from school including holidays. Unauthorised absence includes other absence that has not been agreed such as truancy, arriving late after the register has closed and failing to provide reasons for absence.

How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?

You must submit a request to the school officer at least 14 days before the proposed absence. It will be for the Head Teacher to make a decision as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

Do the 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have to be taken all at the same time before a penalty fine is issued?

No, a penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.

What happens if I am issued with a penalty fine and I don't pay it?

Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty fine is an opportunity for you to settle out of court. If you don't take this opportunity, you can be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

Please contact us if you are worried about your child's attendance.