

# ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025



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# St Mary's Catholic Primary School Attendance Policy

## Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for 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 is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. St Mary's Catholic Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from the school office. Whilst the school recognises that school attendance under the age of 5 is not compulsory, this policy represents good practice in attendance and so some aspects of the policy will be used to monitor the attendance of children younger than 5. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## Aims and 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.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for most children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Attendance Service so that all pupils realise 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.
- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## 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.*

*Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, 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 to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- Refer to the Attendance Service or appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- Ensure that all staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns on CPOMS alerting the Wellbeing Team.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of school 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:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Updating CPOMS where there are attendance concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be recorded appropriately.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensuring families are contacted where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.

- Making referrals to the Attendance Service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's LA Attendance Officer.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

## **Administration staff**

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the late log is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher.
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or Parent Hub message).

## **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## **Governing body**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

# Registration

The school gates open at **8:30AM** and classroom doors open at **8:40AM**. Children must be in their classroom by **8:50AM** which is when the register will be taken. This gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into the building and be ready to learn when lessons start.

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 RM 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 **8:50** 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 9:10 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 or doctor's appointment will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

School process for managing persistent lates:

- Actively discouraging lateness.
- Informing parents of our expectations and offering practical ways to help combat lateness.
- Phone calls, messages, letters from the Wellbeing Team.
- Incentives/rewards for arriving on time.
- Praising and acknowledging latecomers who improve.
- Ensuring that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- Using other methods to encourage punctuality as seen fit by the school.

## Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full and accurate details of the reason for their absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The

Head teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a text message to ask for the reason for absence. If no reason is provided after **5 days** then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. (Attendance Code O).

## **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. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

## **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 a 'Leave of absence request form' available from the school office or website 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.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 97%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. 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.

## **School early intervention for supporting school attendance and ongoing support**

### **Key attendance contacts**

- Caroline Turton – Administration Officer
- Nikki Salt – Family Support Worker
- Alex Downing – Deputy Head Teacher, Senior Attendance Champion

## Contact details

- School Office: [info@st-marys.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-marys.derbyshire.sch.uk)
- Wellbeing Team: [wellbeing@st-marys.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:wellbeing@st-marys.derbyshire.sch.uk)

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

## National framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions (equivalent to five full 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 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).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

## Appendix A

### Parenting Contracts for attendance – guide for families

#### *What is a parenting contract?*

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and either the school and / or the local authority. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly. A parenting contract is meant to support you, the school and the LA to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

#### *What does it involve?*

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal

quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

#### *Do I have to enter into a parenting contract?*

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of a parenting contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.

If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school or local authority.

#### *How is a parenting contract arranged?*

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. The Local Authority Area Attendance Officer may also attend. Depending on their age and understanding, your child(ren) can attend part or all of the meeting.

At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency including the local authority might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you, the school representative and in some cases the area attendance officer.

National contacts:

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) School attendance, absence and your child

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport) Behaviour and attendance - Parental responsibility

Local contacts

Email [attendanceservice@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendanceservice@derbyshire.gov.uk)

If you require this information in audio, Braille or large print, please contact the Attendance Service to arrange.

## Appendix B

### Checklist of actions for pupils with unsatisfactory attendance.

All communication, including letters / texts/ telephone contacts / home visits / meetings in school (including school attendance panel meetings), will be recorded on CPOMS.

Action	Who?	When?	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Undertake standard school procedures including first day calling processes and send letter 1 (Appendix C).</li></ul>	Class Teacher Admin Team		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify emerging attendance concerns (including unauthorised absence) against school attendance thresholds.</li></ul>	Wellbeing Team Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify a key worker to engage with the child and parent/carer, remembering school attendance is a <b>parental responsibility</b>.</li></ul>	Key worker		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>All members of staff who have contact with the child/family are aware and record any contact on CPOMS.</li></ul>	All staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Obtain the lived experience of the child and the views of the parent/carer to identify and remove all reasonable barriers to support the child's attendance.</li></ul>	Wellbeing Team		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>At least 1 attempted home visit made by appointment.</li></ul>	Wellbeing Team		

**If attendance continues to be unsatisfactory and unauthorised, the following work will be undertaken.**

Action	Who?	When?	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send letter to ensure parent/carer is made aware of their legal responsibilities and the possible consequences of non-school attendance.</li> </ul>	Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review child's attendance in accordance with the timescale for improvement given to the parent/carer and</li> </ul>	Deputy Head Teacher		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine whether a penalty notice warning letter should be sent OR if further preventative work is required.</li> </ul>	Deputy Head Teacher		

Consider the length of the monitoring period you wish to state in the penalty notice warning letter. The minimum is 15 school days the maximum is 30 days. It is recommended that 15 school days should only be used in limited circumstances; for example, a child in Year 11 from term 3 onwards

Issue an individual penalty notice warning letter to each parent/carer liable for the child's attendance together with an attendance printout and penalty notice advice leaflet included with this guidance

Ensure the parent/carer is named and the letter is dated and addressed to their current address

Record whether the letter is posted by first class post or hand delivered

Monitor the child's attendance over the stipulated number of days (allowing 2 days for postal delivery not including Sunday)

## Appendix C – template letter 1a

Dear **CONTACT NAME**,

We know the last couple of years have been difficult and has impacted children's education in lots of different ways. Let's not miss any more - the best place for children to be is in school, and the best way to catch up is to turn up.

If your child is struggling to attend because they are not getting enough help, are nervous about going to school or are being bullied, it is really important to talk to us about it and be honest about the reasons. You can speak to the class teacher, wellbeing team, SENDCO or other members of staff. We can make sure the right support is in place for your child. If there are ongoing health concerns affecting attendance, school are able to support a referral to the School Nursing Team.

Help your child catch up with missed work if you can – missed lessons does not have to mean missed learning. Check Parent Hub and Oak National Academy – there are lots of resources available to support you at home.

### Why being in school matters

- being in school as much as possible is the best way to catch up
- school is not just about education – it is about making friends, enjoying new activities, building confidence and skills for future life
- being in school helps to keep children safe and well. Children with good school attendance are less likely to be involved in anti-social behaviour or crime
- children with good school attendance do better in school. Good attendance habits start at a very young age – by encouraging this, you will be setting out values for their future success in life

### Top tips to help your child to enjoy, learn and achieve at school

- keep to regular bed and wake up times to help get a good night's sleep. This will help get them to school on time
- make non-urgent appointments like visits to the dentist and GP outside of school hours. If appointments need to be on school days, only take out time out for the appointment so they are in school for the rest of the day
- if you are not sure if your child can go to school because they are unwell, speak to school and we may be able to advise you
- book holidays and activities in the school holidays, not term time. Children are only in school for **190** days each year, leaving **175** for everything else
- check this NHS information about minor illnesses to see if your child is still able to go to school. Not all illnesses mean children have to miss school <https://derbyshirefamilyhealthservice.nhs.uk/>
- report absence as soon as possible and tell the school why your child is absent and when you expect them to return

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear **CONTACT NAME**

I am writing to you because **NAME** has been late to school **NUMBER** times in **TIMEFRAME**. **HE/SHE** arrived at school after the register had closed on the following dates:

- **DATES**

The school day begins promptly at 8:50AM.

Arriving promptly makes sure that your child does not miss important work, and that disruption to the teacher and other pupils is minimised. Persistent lateness can lead to a significant loss in learning time.

We are committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need. We would therefore like to discuss how we can work with you to help improve **NAME'S** punctuality.

Please contact the Wellbeing Team on the number below to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear **CONTACT NAME**

I am writing to express my concern at **NAME**'s recent high levels of absence from school.

Absence greater than 8% will have a significant impact on his academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with Families to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support **HIS/HER** education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him to address gaps in learning due to absence.

Please see below absence figure for last term as well as the best possible absence figure that can be achieved by working together by the end of next term. In order to reduce your child's absence figure, their attendance needs to increase over time. The target is calculated based on full attendance next term.

Absence figure for <b>Term X</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>%</b>
Absence target for <b>Term X</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>%</b>

We can support you in a number of ways in order to reduce your child's absence. I therefore request that you contact the school Well Being Team as soon as you can to discuss this.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear **CONTACT NAME**

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 required 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 £120 fine per child.
- 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**.

I will continue to monitor the situation but if **NAME's** attendance does not improve over the next **NUMBER** weeks, then legal action may follow. If you wish to talk to **ME/NAME**, **TITLE** regarding this issue or you require any support please do not hesitate to contact **ME/HIM/HER** on the number at the top of this page.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear **CONTACT NAME**

**Re: Unsatisfactory Attendance at NAME School**

**England average attendance %; NAME'S attendance %**

I am writing to you about **NAME'S** education. **HIS/HER** attendance record at **NAME** School is unsatisfactory with some absences unauthorised. As you know, it is a parent's responsibility to make sure their children receive a regular education.

Unless there is a significant improvement in **NAME'S** attendance over the next **NUMBER** school days, I will ask Derbyshire County Council to issue you with a Penalty Notice.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by S23.1 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) a fine of one hundred and twenty pounds (£120) payable within twenty-eight days, reduced to sixty pounds (£60) if paid within twenty-one days, can be imposed for this offence. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If **NAME** has any absence over the next **NUMBER** school days, as a result of a medical condition or medical appointments which could not be made out of school time please provide evidence that this is the case. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards or, if your child is under the hospital, a letter from their consultant. This evidence must relate to the absences taken during monitoring period stated above.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Wellbeing Team on the telephone number in the footer of this letter should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Head Teacher

Dear **CONTACT NAME**

As you know, **NAME**'s attendance has been an ongoing concern and **HE/SHE** is in the category of persistent absentee.

Unfortunately, despite previous legal intervention and offers of support, **NAME** has continued to miss school without good reason and **HIS/HER** absences remain unauthorised.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly then their parent is guilty of an offence.

Consequently, I intend to forward your case to the Local Authority for consideration of legal proceedings against you.

Please contact the Wellbeing Team on the telephone number at the head of this letter, if you wish further clarification on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Head Teacher

## Appendix D – letter to parents

### 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.