



St. John's Catholic Primary School, Burscough

Chapel Lane, Lathom, Ormskirk

Lancashire L40 7RA

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School Attendance Updates – 2024-25

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you because the Department of Education (DfE) has introduced some new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) for managing school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices and amended the law. These changes came into effect from 19 August 2024 and all schools across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. All schools are expected to promote school attendance and provide support if a child is not attending school regularly. This may mean that we raise the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a couple of days off ill. This is not because we don't believe you, but by working with you, we can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. Together, we 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, we need to work together.

National framework for penalty notices

If your child is absent and you haven't received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action. Before that, your child's school and your local council are expected to support you to improve the child's attendance before any measures are put in place. For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers.

To provide consistency, the Government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absence. 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 term-time holidays, 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.





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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.

I would like to strongly reiterate the point above "should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances."

I will not authorise requests for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you believe there are exceptional circumstances then you must ask for a holiday request form from the office and must submit that to Mrs Harrison-Scott.

Punctuality

With regards to punctuality, we also want to make you aware of the change in guidelines. Our AM register must close at 9.30am. This means that any child that arrives after this time will be marked as unauthorised, unless we receive notification from a parent/carer. 10 unauthorised absence may result in a fixed penalty fine.

Our registration process:

8.45am – Children are to come into class and prepare themselves for the first lesson

8.55am – The infant and junior doors are closed and registration takes place.

08:55 till 9.30am - Late mark

9.30am onwards - Unauthorised absence mark

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>

Please understand that these are changes are government led. If you feel there are any barriers to your child attending school each and every day please do not hesitate to discuss this with me.

Many thanks for your support in this matter.

Claire Smith
Headteacher

