



*Inspiring All to Excellence*

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The Fierté Multi-Academy Trust

# Dosthill Primary Academy

## Attendance Policy



## Document and Version Control

<b>Document Title</b>	Attendance Policy
<b>Effective Date</b>	Autumn 2024
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Vice CEO/Executive Headteacher
<b>Policy Approver</b>	Trust Board

Version	Date	Amended by	Comments
V1	Summer 2022	T Hand	Policy compiled collaboratively by Trust Leaders from all Academies.
V2	Summer 2023	T Hand	<p>Following meeting of Trust Leaders, amendments made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section added to make clear that, exceptionally, reasonable adjustments will be made to the policy.</li> </ul> <p>Updated the list of documents utilised by academies.</p>
V3	Summer 2024	D Shakeshaft T Hand	Amendments have been made throughout to reflect the latest statutory guidance from the Department for Education (2024). Once approved by the Trust Board, each Academy will make the adjustments to reflect their specific context.
V3.1	Summer 2024	D Shakeshaft	Context specific adjustments made.

Section	Changes Made

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## Aims and Values underpinning the Policy

**Our vision is to inspire all to excellence.** This can only be achieved if pupils attend school regularly, benefitting from the curriculum and teaching available. Parents play an intrinsic role inspiring their children to take advantage of all we have to offer as a Trust.

**The Trust vision is underpinned by our values:**

*'We are brave'* - in the context of attendance, this means that, without fear or favour, we set high expectations and will relentlessly challenge poor attendance and punctuality seeking all possible solutions.

*'We care'* - in the context of attendance, this means creating the enabling conditions for children to attend every day, so they achieve.

*'We celebrate individuality'* - in the context of attendance, this means we will adopt an empathetic approach to individual circumstances and needs whilst remaining uncompromising. *Every child in Fierté genuinely matters.*

*'We leave no one behind'* - in the context of attendance, this means, we are inclusive of all pupils and families, and we will provide tailored support in response to the need for help.

**This policy complies with our Funding Agreement and Articles of Association.**

*This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any individual and it helps to promote equality across Fierté Multi-Academy Trust.*

## Reasonable Adjustments

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers including those who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other recognised vulnerabilities. Whilst always maintaining the highest expectations of attendance, we will be mindful of any genuine additional barriers a pupil or family may face. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments to this policy will be made. It is anticipated that this will be exceptional and not common practice.

## Attendance Pathway

Our Trust is committed to successfully treating the root causes of absence. We will work to remove barriers to attendance at home, in school, and more broadly together in partnership with families and other local partners following the pathway below:

<b>Expect</b>	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.
<b>Monitor</b>	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance ( <i>at individual and cohort level</i> ) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them.
<b>Listen and understand</b>	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance -agreeing how all partners can work together to resolve them.
<b>Facilitate support</b>	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access support to overcome the barriers outside of school. <i>This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.</i>
<b>Formalise support</b>	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners work together to clearly explain consequences and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. <i>Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.</i>
<b>Enforce</b>	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: <i>a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.</i>

## Expectations and Daily routines

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, and independent learners who thrive in school. Good attendance is an expectation and a responsibility of parents.

Promoting excellent attendance is also the responsibility of the whole school community. Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it is everyone's responsibility. It is our expectation that all pupils, staff, and leaders have a shared responsibility to uphold the expectations set out in this policy.

## What are our daily attendance routines?

Academy Day Timings

<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Registration:</b> after this time, pupils are <b>late</b>	<b>Registers close:</b> after this time, the absence is <b>unauthorised</b>	<b>Lunchtime</b>	<b>End of Day:</b> after this time, pupils will be <b>dismissed</b>
<b>EYFS Reception</b>	8:45am	9:05am	11:40am to 12:50pm	3:15pm
<b>Year 1</b>	8:45am	9:05am	11:55pm to 12:55pm	3:15pm
<b>Year 2</b>	8:45am	9:05am	12:00pm to 1:00pm	3:15pm
<b>Key Stage 2</b>	8:45am	9:05am	12:05pm to 1:05pm	3:15pm

Members of school staff will warmly welcome children to school in the morning, greeting them on the gate and as they arrive and enter the classrooms. At Dosthill Primary Academy, gates and doors are open from 8:35am.

## Procedures for late arrival or early collection

In Fierté Multi Academy Trust, we actively discourage late arrival and are alert to patterns of late arrival.

- Parents are expected to bring their children to school on time every day.
- If your child arrives after 8:45 am, they will be recorded as Late (L code) on the register.
- If they arrive 20 minutes after registration, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning (a U code).
- When pupils arrive late, they are required to report to the main office and parents are asked to sign them in to record their arrival and provide reasons for lateness.
- Children should not sign themselves in. If they are unaccompanied, school will contact parents at the earliest opportunity.
- If children are collected from school 30 minutes before the end of the day and the absence is unplanned, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code) for the afternoon session unless there are exceptional circumstances\*.

## Procedures for unplanned absence

- The school operates a first day contact system where parents are required to telephone and inform school on the morning of the first day of absence before 9.15am or as soon as is practicably possible.
- The telephone number is (01827) 214930
- If there has been no contact, we will text or telephone parents to identify why their child is not in school. This is part of the school's commitment to safeguarding the safety and welfare of children.
- We expect parents will let us know the reason for any absence by contacting school. If you do not answer or respond, then the academy may visit your home to check on your child's welfare (*these visits may be unannounced*).
- When your child is absent for longer than a day, it is important to maintain daily contact with school. If contact is not maintained, school staff will continue to communicate via telephone.
- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- Where possible, medical appointments should be made and booked before the start and after the end of the school day. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and details of the appointment shared.
- Unexplained periods of absence will be followed up by the school office. If no evidence is provided that will allow us to authorise the period, absences will be marked as unauthorised.

## Leave of absence requests

- The school looks at each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request, however, a leave of absence during term time is rarely authorised.
- Holidays are almost never authorised and are most likely to result in a fixed penalty notice.
- If a request is made, it should be as far in advance as possible of the planned absence and, where possible, at least 7 weeks (half a term) before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the attendance page on our website or from the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

- The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#):
  - A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
  - Taking part in a regulated performance (*e.g. in line with a license issued by the local authority, for example - to perform in a show*)
  - Exceptional circumstances
- Exceptional circumstances are situations deemed by the Headteacher to be out of the ordinary and warrant a pupil's absence from school. These circumstances are not prescriptively defined, allowing a degree of discretion based on individual facts and circumstances in each case. In Fierté Multi-Academy Trust, headteachers routinely consult on individual requests with peers and the Executive Leadership Team to quality assure decisions and ensure a consistent process.
- Factors that may be considered exceptional could include:
  - Serious illness or bereavement of a family member
  - Important religious observances
  - Service personnel returning from active deployment

## Promoting Good Attendance

Although we believe the main reward for a child's good attendance is being in school, therefore being able to get the best out of their education, the following incentives are available for good attendance:

- Positive texts to parents to inform parents/guardians of their good attendance
- Class attendance awards
- Weekly attendance certificate for the class with the highest attendance (award of an attendance mascot)
- Class with the highest attendance is recorded in the Newsletter
- Termly attendance assemblies with certificates
- End of year attendance certificates and awards for 96%+ attendance

## Data and monitoring

### How will we track the attendance of children?

- The school will routinely monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) with regular half-termly, termly, and yearly checkpoints across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.
- Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

## Daily Routine

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every effort is made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. After the registers have closed, a report is run to check on any absentees. The member of staff responsible for running these reports must share concerns with a member of the Senior Leadership Team – e.g., *high numbers of absences in one class, contagious infections, safeguarding concerns or absence of siblings*.

This is then cross-referenced and confirmed with class teachers prior to sending out a 'safe and well' text to parents.

## Weekly

- Attendance is shared with children in a weekly assembly.
- A weekly attendance meeting is held where all absences are reviewed and discussed.
- Any remaining N codes (*no explanation provided for absences*) are followed up weekly with a letter.
- If no reason for any absence is provided or we have not been able to get in contact with parents, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Families of pupils who have previously been persistently absent or are at increased risk of persistent absence are contacted and early school-based support offered if applicable.
- During the weekly attendance meeting, if it is noted that any local or national thresholds have been met (see page 8) then referrals to the Local Authority for the issuing of Penalty Notices are considered.

## Half Termly

- The number of lates and absences are also monitored half termly.
- When a pupil's data identifies them as being at moderate risk of persistent absence, staff make a call home or meet parents to discuss any concerns and enquire about any support we can offer - explaining how much learning has been lost and the impact of this. Children *may* be included in these discussions where appropriate.
- Data includes the number of sessions or days missed, spells of absence (see table on page 9) and other risk and protective factors – e.g. *a pupil whose attendance was <90% in the previous academic year, has missed 4 days of school in the first half-term of autumn in 2 spells of absence*.
- A record of these meetings is kept and stored on the school's Management Information System; these are further reviewed half termly. Attendance support plans will be implemented throughout the term as appropriate and reviewed half termly which may include offering an Early Help Assessment.

## Termly





- Attendance certificates are awarded.
- Colour coded letters are sent out at the end of each term.
- If attendance is a concern, this will be raised in termly parent/teacher consultation meetings.
- Data is analysed including analysis of vulnerable groups which is shared with governors.
- Attendance is also monitored in each Academy through termly meetings with the Trust CEO and Vice CEO. The impact of any support put in place is determined and any further strategies identified.
- Trustees also evaluate attendance figures on a termly basis identifying any support required or offering challenge to members of the Executive Team where necessary.

## End of year

An annual attendance record is sent home with the end of year school report.

# Escalation of Support and Intervention

How will we ensure children are safe and tackle absence together?

Days of Absence	Impact on Pupil	Key Responsibility in School	Support and Action
 <p><b>0 to 8.5 days</b></p> <p>Low risk of persistent absence</p>	<p><i>Few (if any) lessons are being missed.</i></p> <p><i>Impact upon learning is minimal.</i></p>	<p>Teachers keep accurate attendance records and regularly celebrate good and improving attendance.</p> <p>Attendance Champion ensures daily follow up of absences are undertaken.</p>	<p>Build strong relationships with pupils and families and maintain a whole school culture promoting regular attendance.</p> <p>Warm welcome, praise and encouragement.</p> <p>Rewards <i>e.g., certificates.</i></p>
 <p><b>9 to 14 days</b></p> <p>Risk of persistent absence</p>	<p><i>Risk/high risk of underachievement.</i></p> <p><i>Child will struggle to reach their full potential.</i></p>	<p>Teachers contact parents to discuss absence data where the number of sessions missed is increasing.</p> <p>Teacher may refer to the school's Attendance Champion who identifies the best person or people to work alongside and support the pupil/family.</p>	<p>School monitors attendance (<i>at least fortnightly</i>) including reasons for and patterns of absence.</p> <p>Listen to and understand barriers to learning – working together to try and remove them.</p> <p>Letter highlighting concern and restating expectations.</p> <p>Escalation if attendance level falls.</p> <p>Rewards/recognition where attendance improves and acknowledgement to parents/carers</p>
 <p><b>14.5 to 18.5 days</b></p> <p>High risk of persistent absence</p>	<p><i>High/severe risk of underachievement.</i></p>	<p>Academy Attendance Champion contacts parents to offer an attendance improvement plan. Inform the LA.</p> <p>Consideration of legal action (<i>risk of fine being issued</i>).</p>	<p>Attendance monitoring weekly.</p> <p>Telephone call/meeting with parents and carers.</p> <p>Referral to Education Welfare Officer should attendance not improve.</p>
 <p><b>19 days or more</b></p> <p>Locked into persistent absence for the academic year</p>	<p><i>Extreme risk of underachievement.</i></p>	<p>Senior Leader/Trust Wellbeing Lead/EWO</p> <p>Legal action (fine).</p>	<p>Plan created including parents/carers and child (where appropriate).</p> <p>Fortnightly monitoring of plan.</p> <p>Escalate to prosecution/other formal measures <i>e.g., Parenting contracts, Education Supervision Orders, Social Care.</i></p>



<i>Spells of Absence</i>	<i>Impact on Level of Risk of Persistent Absence</i>
1 to 2	Low
3 to 4	Moderate
5 or more	High

### *How will we ensure that our work is effective?*

This will be though:

- Meetings with families gathering their feedback
- Reviewing the implementation of support plans
- Measure the impact of strategies to improve attendance and/or punctuality
- Monitoring individual, group, class and whole school attendance over time including comparing these to Trust and national benchmarks.

## Persistent and Severe Absence

The definitions of persistent and severe absences in England's schools are:

- **Persistent absence:** Missing 10% or more of school sessions – *this equates to 38 sessions (19 days) or more within the academic year.*
- **Severe absence:** Missing 50% or more of school sessions – *this equates to 190 sessions (95 days) or more within the academic year.*

## Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Improving attendance is in everyone's interests and it's everyone's business. It is our expectation that all leaders, staff, pupils and parents have a shared responsibility to uphold the expectations set out in this policy.

### **It is the responsibility of the academy trustees and governing committees to:**

- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across all school's policies and ethos
- Ensure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Ensure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and provide support and challenge
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, work with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

- Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Make sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

#### **It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to:**

- Implement this policy.
- Monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors/the Trust.
- Support staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, or authorise Attendance Champions/Office Managers to do so.
- Work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers.
- Communicate with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicate the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

#### **It is the responsibility of the designated senior leader responsible for attendance (Attendance Champion) to:**

- Lead, champion and improve attendance across the school.
- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes.
- Have a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress in attendance.
- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence, and ensure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaise with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.
- Build close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Create intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

### It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Have high expectations in their class with regards to attendance.
- Monitor class attendance, noticing and addressing any patterns of absence.
- Be proactive in securing good attendance for their class.
- Communicate with parents about their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Support pupils who have issues surrounding attendance.
- Inform the school office of any reasons they receive for a pupil being absent.
- Escalate concerns about absence to the SLT / DSL / Attendance Champion / as soon as possible
- Ensure the register is completed and saved accurately each morning and afternoon as soon as possible.
- Set a good personal example with regards to attendance and punctuality.
- Read and comply with this policy.

### It is the responsibility of all parents to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:15am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting:

Name	Role	Phone	Email
David Shakeshaft	Executive Headteacher	(01827) 214935	exehead@dosathill.org
Richard Gould	Head of School	(01827) 214930	headofschool@dosthill.org
Katie Smith	SENDCo	(01827) 214930	sendco@dosthill.org

### It is the responsibility of all pupils to:

- Attend school whenever they are fit and able to do so.
- Attend school, prepared and on time.
- Complete any catch-up work following a longer period of absence.

## Tailored support

The schools MIS (Arbor) is used to regularly analyse pupils' attendance and punctuality by administrative staff, class teachers and our Attendance Champion. Where attendance and punctuality are not as expected, we adopt an empathetic approach to individual circumstances and needs whilst remaining uncompromising, providing tailored support in response to the need for help.

As poor attendance contributes to significant amounts of lost learning, which impacts negatively, we have a responsibility to ensure children are attending school regularly. However, we endeavour to listen, understand, empathise and support your child to be in school.

## Supporting pupils

### Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

- We will work closely with families to build a strong relationship over time.
- We will listen to and understand barriers to attendance.
- Working with each family and their unique situation, we will work with families to remove barriers adopting an open-minded and solution-focused mindset.

### Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

- We will make reasonable adjustments in consultation with parents and carers.
- We will make use of effective practice examples shared by the Department for Education (for example Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance effective practice examples February 2023), from within the Trust and from external setting, bodies or charities.
- Adjustments and support will be tailored to the needs of individual pupils.
- Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

- We will work closely with children and their families to identify the worries they have and the strategies that can be put in place to address these.
- Regular empathetic and open communication will always be adopted.
- Strategies could include home visits, orientation visits, phased returns, tutoring/catch-up programmes and pastoral support e.g. *check-ins throughout the day with a trusted adult*.
- Support Plans will be co-developed, implemented and reviewed, adapted as required to changing circumstances.

## Individual plans (monitoring and impact)

Research shows that children with good attendance throughout their school years reach their full potential and achieve highly.

If your child's attendance is a concern, you will have a meeting with the school's Attendance Champion to support you in enabling your child to be in school. The meeting will explore the reasons for absence alongside strategies to support and improve attendance. The plan will be in place for 4 weeks, monitored and then reviewed with parents for impact, where the expectation is to see a significant improvement. The expected improvement will be recorded on the plan.

Where attendance concerns relate to taking a holiday during term time, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the impact holidays have on academic attainment and progress.

## Penalty Notices

The national threshold for issuing penalty notices is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

All Fierte Multi-Academy Trust schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold.

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the Trust.

### Considerations

- Could the school offer support or increase its support to the child and family to address the barriers to attendance?
- Is a penalty notice the best tool to improve attendance?
- Would a **Notice to Improve** be appropriate?
- Should the school use another legal intervention?
- Has the school made all reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 to facilitate attendance.

### Notice to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a **Notice to Improve** to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for Staffordshire.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far.
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- A clear period of between 3 and 6 weeks for improvement.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

### Two penalty notices in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts when the first penalty notice is issued.

The first penalty notice for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent, per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

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.

### Discretionary powers

The national threshold provides a consistent approach across England for issuing fines to parents over unauthorised absences. However, if in an individual case the school and 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 avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold (long weekends), or for repeated absence for family events or days trips.*

Fierté Multi Academy Schools will advise the authority of all unauthorised leave in term time and jointly consider if it meets the criteria for use of discretion to issue a penalty notice under the threshold.

## Appendix 1 Coding attendance in line with DFE guidance 2024:

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent - leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent - other authorised reasons</b>		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		

<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g., due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial, or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent - unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned, including school holidays



## Appendix 2 Staffordshire template letter responding to leave of absence requests:

Dear (both parents should receive individually named letters)

**CHILD'S NAME / DOB**

Thank you for your leave of absence request informing us that **CHILD** will be absent from school from **ABSENCE DATES**.

You will be aware the Department for Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority, Fierté Multi Academy trustees and local governors support this.

I have considered your application very carefully. Whilst I understand the reason(s) for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional or in line with Trust policies. Therefore, your child's absence from school during this period has been recorded as **unauthorised absence** and will be recorded in the attendance register with the "G" code.

As a school, we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance ([effective 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024](#)). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **first** offence the penalty notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision, which aligns to Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be planned for the 13 weeks of school holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

### Appendix 3 Staffordshire template letter responding to **suspected** leave during term time:

Dear (both parents should receive an individual copy)

**CHILD'S NAME / DOB**

We have reason to believe that **CHILD'S NAME** absences between **DATES** were due to unrequested leave. The reason for this is because: (select which is appropriate or enter your own)

- School called and received a foreign dial tone.
- School called you and you informed us you were on holiday.
- Your child told their teacher.
- Home visits were completed with no answer.

As a school, we make every effort to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. Where no reason for absence is provided within 5 school days, or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is legitimate, we are required to amend the pupil's attendance to be recorded as unauthorised.

We understand you may wish to offer an alternative explanation for your child's absence. We will, therefore, allow you 5 school days from the date of this letter to provide evidence that supports a legitimate reason for the absence. If we do not receive appropriate evidence by this time, then we will continue to code your child's absence as an unauthorised.

As a school, we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a penalty notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **first** offence the penalty notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision, which aligns to Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be planned for the 13 weeks of school holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely