Thursday 20th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

As you will no doubt be aware, the government recently outlined new guidance and procedures surrounding children and young people’s attendance in school. At Park Aspire, we are committed to improving the outcomes for our children in school and as a result treat attendance as a key part of school life.

Over the course of the year, we will be monitoring pupil attendance on a regular basis and will identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. To start our attendance monitoring process in a transparent way, this letter gives you an attendance figure currently, for your child.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attendance |  |
| Authorised Absence |  |
| Unauthorised Absence |  |
| Number of late sessions |  |
| Number of “unauthorised” lates |  |

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child’s future progression.

|  |
| --- |
| **Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year**  Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future. |
| **95%: 10 days absence a year**  These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance. |
| **90% and below: 19 days + absence a year**  The Government classes Young People in this group as “Persistent Absentees”, and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority. |

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

|  |
| --- |
| **5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year** |
| **10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year** |
| **15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year** |
| **20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year** |
| **30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year** |

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives 30 minutes after the register has been taken, they will have an “unauthorised” late mark – this is the same as an “unauthorised absence” - an explanation of this term and the possible consequences are attached. At Park Aspire, our registers close at 9:30am.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact myself on the school number below.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Beki Farrar

Assistant Headteacher for Safeguarding and Attendance

**Unauthorised absence from school – key points explained – September 2024**

**Fines for unauthorised absence from school**

Unauthorised absences are any absence not agreed by your child's school. If your child has unauthorised absences in an academic year, you may be liable for a penalty notice.

To avoid this, it’s important to ensure that your child attends school everyday and on time and that if they are absent, the school are able to authorise the absence.  
It is only the headteacher or principal of a school, who can authorise school absence.

**Issuing a penalty notice**

Under the [Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance), (statutory guidance effective from the 19 August 2024), a national framework for the use of penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school, has been introduced by the Department for Education.

**There is now a national threshold**

There is a single consistent **national threshold** for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of **10 sessions** (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence, within a rolling **10 school week** period.

For example:

* a **5 day** holiday in term time (term time leave), would meet the national threshold.
* **5 days** of unauthorised absence due to irregular school attendance, would meet the national threshold
  + The 10 school week period can span different terms or school years.

**Who may be issued with a Penalty Notice?**

**Penalty Notices are issued per \*parent - per child**

* Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.
* For example:
* 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent, who allowed the absence, receiving 3 separate fines.

A parent is defined as the natural parent, the person with whom the child lives and/or has day to day care of the child.

**Fines and prosecution**

**First offence**  
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount will be:  
•    £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.  
•    increasing to £160 if paid between days 22 to 28.

**Second offence (within 3 years)**  
The Second time a Penalty Notice is considered and issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount will be:  
•    £160 per parent, per child, payable 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 school Attendance, a Penalty Notice will **not** be issued.

* The case will be referred to the Magistrate’s Court for consideration.
  + Upon Prosecution a parent can receive a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500.

If you pay the penalty notice within the timeframe, as indicated, you cannot be prosecuted for the period covered by the penalty notice. You do still remain liable to prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve.

If you don't pay the fine, you'll be prosecuted for the original offence of failing to secure attendance. If proven, the court can impose a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

Bradford Council has a local penalty notice code of conduct, to ensure that the national framework is adhered to and there is consistency across all schools within the local authority.

**Help and advice**

If you have concerns about your child's attendance, you should contact:

* your child's school first
* the Bradford Attendance Support Team if your child is causing you special concern - [attendance@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@bradford.gov.uk)

Schools must work with parents and children at as early a stage as possible to address concerns that may lead to irregular school attendance. Interventions and preventative measures must be put into place to support children to access their education. A referral to Early Help may also provide additional support with your child’s attendance.