



Our Ref; ED/KS
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Dear Parents and Carers

New Attendance Rules for September 2024

You may be aware that new guidance on managing school attendance will become mandatory from September 2024. This letter is to give you information on the new rules and how it may affect you. Prior to Covid, absenteeism nationally had been on the decline, but since the lockdowns, attitudes towards attendance appear to have changed and there has been a steep increase in absenteeism. At Beacon Academy we've always believed that a supportive approach to attendance is best and we have always engaged with families should there be any barriers to their child's attendance or punctuality.

Main Changes

National fine thresholds

From September, schools must consider penalty notices where the national threshold is met and sufficient support has been offered or provided (on a case by case basis). The national threshold is if a pupil misses 10 sessions (a session equates to a half day) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Penalty Notices and Improvement Notices

There is a new framework for penalty notices with increased amounts and increases for subsequent absences within a set period which applies to poor attendance and holidays. There is an increase to the rate of a penalty notice to £160 if paid within 28 days and £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at £80. Parents will also receive "improvement notices" where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with education and improve their child's attendance before a fine is issued. Leave of absence can only be granted for specific circumstances which are called 'special circumstance' absence. The regulations set out what special circumstances can and cannot cover.

Mental Health Awareness

All schools should be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with

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additional support. The guidance acknowledges “many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods”. But it is “important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly”.

Our Practice

At Beacon Academy we have an Attendance Team composed of Mrs Collett, Mr Harris and Mrs Meyer. They work with our pupils and parents to discuss the best approach to individual attendance and punctuality challenges. We will continue to work with you to support your children to access their education on a face to face, regular basis, as we know that the better a pupil's attendance, the better habits they form for their working lives, and the better their educational outcomes will be. Please do contact us if you would like more information about the forthcoming changes.

Best wishes

Mr J Thurley
Headteacher

DfE statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

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