



Date: Autumn term 2022

School Attendance: Helping Children and Young People to Succeed

School is an important part of the lives of children and young people. It is where they begin to develop new skills, make friendships and it helps prepare them for their future. When a child is absent from school, they can miss out on these vital opportunities and their learning and friendships may suffer. Whilst 90% is an excellent result in a test, an attendance level of 90% is poor, children are classed as persistently absent and children's outcomes in school can be badly affected. Any absence that is not authorised by the school is a reason for concern.

Parents and carers have the legal responsibility to ensure that a child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Absence taken during the school term can have a negative impact on a child's education. Therefore:

Holidays in term Time.

- Schools rarely agree to parents/carers taking their children out of school for the purposes of leave of absence / holidays in term-time. This is not an automatic entitlement and only the Head teacher can authorise this if a parent applies in advance and the Head teacher's view is that there are exceptional circumstances. **If your child misses school for the purposes of a holiday or a trip and the absence is not agreed, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice, or you may be prosecuted.**

Penalty Notices are a fine of:

- **£120 per parent per child if paid in full within 28 days** (reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days)
- If a Penalty Notice is not fully paid within 28 days, the Local Authority has no option but to prosecute a parent in the Magistrates' Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- In Court, if a parent pleads guilty, or is found guilty, they will then have a criminal record. The court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a parenting order.

Unauthorised absence from school.

- Where schools have exhausted all avenues to address attendance issues and have been unsuccessful and there are at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absences in a half term period, a referral may be made for statutory intervention.
- The City of Wolverhampton Council Attendance Team will then either issue parents with a warning notice giving them a period of time to improve school attendance or invite them to a legal meeting to discuss the attendance concerns. Should

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unauthorised absences continue, the local authority may consider prosecution as follows.

- **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:**
'If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence'
The court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a parenting order.
- **Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:**
Parents are aware their child is absent regularly from school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, they are guilty of an offence.
The court can fine you up to £2500 per child and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months, and order payment of the prosecution costs.

You can help your child by ensuring that they arrive on time and that you arrange any appointments for them (e.g. dental check ups) outside school hours. If your child has regular absences the school may request medical evidence.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any issues affecting your child's attendance, please contact your child's school in the first instance or the Local Authority Attendance Team on 01902 550621.

Jameel Mullan
Attendance & Inclusion Service Manager