



# Meir Heath Academy

## Principal: Mrs M Southern

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Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

The Department for Education have shared with schools/academies and Local Authorities changes to attendance guidance that will become statutory and must be implemented after the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. These changes must be made by all schools/academies and Local Authorities across the country, with the aim of ensuring consistent approaches. These changes have been broken down into 4 categories.

### 1. A new National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices

Any attendance penalty notices issued after the **19<sup>th</sup> August 2024** will be issued in line with the new regulations.

The new Penalty Notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice, for each child who is absent. For example, 2 parents and 3 children, each parent will receive 3 penalty notices for £160 each, with a family total of £960 in fines.
- The fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. This will be considered your first offence.
- The next time an offence occurs, within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, with no reduction.
- The third time an offence occurs this will be presented to Magistrate's court with no penalty notice issued.

This will include Term Time Leave fines, and Irregular Attendance. Term time leave does not just include holidays. Where a child is absent and it is believed they are absent due to term time leave, schools will be expected to carry out a home visit and see the child on or before the 3<sup>rd</sup> school day of absence.

For irregular attendance - Where a child has unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in any 10-week period, the school must consider escalation to prosecution. Sessions refer to each half a school day, with most schools having 2 sessions each day. The school must consider the reasons for the absence, the support already offered, and the engagement of the parents/carers and young person. These 10 sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks, or unauthorised absence.

It is therefore important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. Schools will consider NHS guidance Health protection in children and young people settings, including education - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)) and Is my child too ill for school? - NHS ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) when making their decision whether to authorise absence due to illness.

### 2. Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance

The Department for Education have updated the Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)) available on the DFE website. This clarifies the expectations for parents, schools and the Local Authority to promote the importance of regular attendance at school, and to provide ideas for support and interventions when a young person is not attending school on a regular basis.

### **3. Regulation changes to modernise school attendance and admission registers.**

The predominant change is around the use of attendance coding for schools to use on their attendance register. This may mean that you see different marks on your child's attendance certificate, including sub codes for example C2 for a reduced timetable, or Y4 for school closed due to weather conditions. The H code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed, therefore, I can no longer authorise term time leave, unless there are exceptional circumstances covered by the C code. I must request an attendance penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absence.

Another change to these regulations is that parents must accept the school place offered prior to their child going on school roll. Therefore, if you have been offered a school place that was not one of your preferences you must either accept the school place or notify the Local Authority how you intent to educate your child.

### **4. Regulations will come into force on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools.**

This means that your child's attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority every day. This will be live data. This will allow the DFE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and see improvement in attendance, and will allow the Local Authority to provide advice, support, and Early Help services. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends for example a child reported as ill the same week each year, or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence.

St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust is in the process of updating its Attendance and Punctuality policy to reflect these changes. Once information from each home Local Authority supporting the St Bart's academies has been received, a revised policy will be uploaded to the academy website.

However, with all of these changes the priority is supporting a young person to access school every day, ensuring they have the reasonable adjustments, interventions and early help to engage in their learning.

If your child is finding attending school difficult, is feeling anxious about attending school, or needs help to access their education speak to the school, arrange to meet to discuss reasonable adjustments and the support available for your child.

Every school day matters. If you have any queries, questions or concerns please email the school office to contact Mrs. Askey or speak to your child's class teacher.

Kind regards,

Mrs Southern  
Proud Principal of Meir Heath Academy



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***Important Information for Parents.***

***Changes as of 19th of August 2024 to the issue of Penalty Notices to address School Attendance.***

Dear Parents,

**THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT)  
REGULATIONS 2024 No. 210.**

New legislation comes into force on 19.08.24 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance to commence in all Local Authorities nationwide.

The following changes have been made:

- the number of unauthorised absences to 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in the most recent 10 school week period.
- the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child to 2 within a 3-year period.
- It increases the amount of the penalty notice from £120 to £160 (if paid within 28 days) and £60 to £80 (if paid within 21 days) for the first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period.
- It sets the amount of any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice was issued to £160 to be paid within 28 days. No discount is offered.
- Further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

You can ring/email your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Claire Tomlinson

*School Improvement Officer/Attendance Lead for St. Bart's Trust*

