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National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have been asked to share new guidance for penalty notices for school absence coming into effect from 19th August 2024.

The National Framework aims to:

- Make penalty notices more effective by ensuring they are only used in cases where they are the most appropriate tool.
- Prioritise the support first approach by expecting support to be used in cases where it is appropriate.
- Improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered.
- Improve the deterrent effect of a penalty notice by increasing the amount and introducing a new national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3 year period.

The National Framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024.
- Unauthorised absence sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or sporadic (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The 10 school week period may span different terms or school years.
- The option of using a 'Notice to Improve' where support is appropriate to provide a final opportunity to engage with support to prevent a penalty notice being issued.
- The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

If you're having trouble getting your child to go to school, the school will discuss attendance problems with you and should agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance.

The Council offers support through Team around the Family (TAF) and Live Well.

[Home | Live Well Cheshire West \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](http://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,

C Cartwright

Carla Cartwright
Head Teacher