

16th July 2024

Dear parents/carers

Penalty notice fines for school attendance are changing

We would like to say a **big thank you** to all our parents and carers for supporting your children to attend school and engage so well with their learning. We know that this reflects the value our families place on children learning in school every day. We are looking forward to continuing to work together, to support best attendance and learning.

You may be aware that the government has made some changes to the penalty notices for unauthorised absence rules, which come into effect from 19 August 2024, in time for the new school year. We wanted to let you know about these changes before the summer holiday. This is the updated information:

Sanction	Outcome
First penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The penalty is £80 (per parent/carer, per child) payable within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. (If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted for the child's unauthorised absence.)
Second penalty notice (in a 3-year rolling period)	The second time a penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carer for the same child the amount will be £160 per parent/carer, per child (if paid within 28 days). There is no reduction in the amount if the penalty is paid early. (Again, if the fine is not paid, the parent/carer may be prosecuted.)
Prosecution	Fines per parent/carer will be capped to two fines within any 3-year period. Once this limit has been reached, a prosecution will be considered. Prosecution may result in fines of up to £2,500 per parent/carer, per child.

Our academy's approach to leave of absence requests will still be the same – we will not authorise any leave of absence in term time, unless satisfied the reason is exceptional. We ask parents and carers to request permission in advance, and only if absolutely necessary. Any requests should be put in writing via the appropriate form (available from City Academy Reception) and wherever possible with at least four school weeks' notice. To assist parents and carers in booking holidays and arranging other events, our term date information can be found here <https://cityacademybristol.clf.uk/our-academy/term-dates/>.

Grit, Honesty and Team Spirit

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From 19 August, if a child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks, their parent/carer(s) may receive a penalty notice. (A morning or afternoon is one session; a whole school day is two sessions.) However, the government's rules also allow for penalty notices to be issued for less unauthorised absence, in some circumstances, for example where parents or carers appear to be avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events which the school has not authorised absence for.

Please note: Penalty notices are issued to parents and carers as an alternative to prosecution and are intended to prevent the need for court action. A penalty notice may not be issued if prosecution is considered a more appropriate sanction for a pupil's unauthorised absence.

Please contact our Attendance Team at attendance@cab.clf.uk if you have any questions about this information.

Yours Sincerely

Ben Tucker, Principal

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