

**ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(Aided) PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOVER**

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'Learning for life with God as our guide'

17th July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Department for Education – Changes to issuing penalty notices for leave/unauthorised absence in term time

As we are always transparent and honest with our school community, we need to make you aware of some important changes that could affect you if you to take your child out of school during term time.

In February 2024, the Department for Education published 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. Within this document, it outlines the changes to issuing penalty notices that come into effect on **19th August 2024**. These are summarised below.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued by the Local Authority to each parent, for each child that is absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Five consecutive days of term-time leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued by the Local Authority for term-time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered by the Local Authority when there have been 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. Please make sure that you contact the school office to report and explain any absences for your child.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued by the Local Authority for term-time leave or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- *£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. This amount is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.*

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued by the Local Authority for term-time leave or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- *£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. There will be no offer of a reduction.*



Canterbury Diocesan
Board of Education



Third Offence (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for term-time leave or unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice will not be issued by the Local Authority, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court.

Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

New two Penalty Notice limit in a three-year period

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first Penalty Notice is issued by the Local Authority to them after the 19th August 2024.

As always, we are here to support families. We are always open and transparent with families and therefore we wanted to make you aware of the changes being made by the government to combat leave being taken in term-time and low attendance generally. As you can see, the fines applied from August of this year will be far more substantial than in recent years.

More information can be found by clicking on the link:

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

Yours sincerely,



Mr Lamprell
Head of School