West Berkshire COUNCIL

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold

A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by **ALL** schools in England, this is:

- 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period
- These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence
- **For example:** a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold
- The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years

Who may be fined?

- Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school
- **For example:** 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:

- **£160 per parent, per child** - payable within 28 days
- **If paid within 21 days, the fine will decrease to £80 per parent, per child**

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:

- **£160 per parent, per child** – payable within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice **WILL NOT** be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and **fines of up to £2,500**
- Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'**