



28<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Reminder of Term Start and New Attendance Guidance**

I write to you in the hope that you and your family have had a good summer break.

As a reminder, term starts on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024** at the following times:

Year 7:	8.25 am
Year 8:	9.00 am
Year 9 & 10:	9.30 am
Year 11:	10.00 am

### **Important Attendance Information**

The Department for Education (DfE) have shared with schools and Local Authorities changes to attendance guidance that will become statutory and must be implemented from August 19th, 2024. These changes must be made by all schools and Local Authorities across the country, with the aim of ensuring consistent approaches. [A copy of the press release can be found at this link.](#)

These changes have been broken down into 5 categories.

#### **1) A new National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices**

Any attendance penalty notices issued after the 19th of 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 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 Magistrates' 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 3rd school day of absence.

#### **2) Changes for late arrivals and the threshold for issuing penalty notices**

From August 2024, school registers can only be left open for 30 minutes, after which a student will be marked as absent. If the student is marked 'N' but arrives later in the session after the register has closed,

the attendance register will be amended to mark them as absent using code 'U' (unauthorised absence), or another absence code that is more appropriate. **This means that if your child is more than 30 minutes late to school, they will receive a 'U' code, indicating an unauthorised absence.** The new threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be a combination of unauthorised absence, the missed sessions do not have to be consecutive, and the period of 10 weeks can span different terms and/or different school years (e.g. summer term of Year 8 and autumn term of Year 9).

Additionally, if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. An example of this would be where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. The school will also have a duty to report cases to Birmingham City Council where a child is absent for 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of illness.

It is therefore important for your child to attend school on time, every day. It is also important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. We will consider NHS guidance; [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#) and [Is my child too ill for school?](#) when making their decision whether to authorise absence due to illness.

### **3) Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance**

From August 2024, the DfE's guidance on attendance will become statutory, the full guidance can be found at this [link](#). This clarifies the expectations for parents, schools and the Local Authority in promoting 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.

### **4) 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 will see different marks on your child's attendance certificate. The 'H' code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed, therefore Headteachers can no longer authorise term time leave, unless there are exceptional circumstances covered by the 'C' code and must request an attendance penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absence.

### **5) Regulations will come into force on the 19th of August 2024 to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools.**

This means that your child's attendance 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 improvements 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 in the same week each year, or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence.

With all the changes, the priority is supporting children to be in school every day. **Every school day matters.** We would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child attends school so that they continue to progress and develop.

Yours sincerely



**Mr R Reeve**  
Headteacher