

Our Ref: MS/LNdT
Date: 2nd July 2014
Enquiries to: Margaret Smith
Tel: 01473 265348
Fax: 01473 216853

To: Parent / Carer

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Amendments to Penalty Notices Code of Conduct to tackle non-school attendance

Reducing absence from school is a key priority both nationally and locally. In Suffolk, we appreciate that the majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Suffolk County Council is committed to providing all children with the best start in life and works hard to improve the attendance of a small but significant minority.

This letter is to inform you that, from 1st September 2014, the Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notice fines when unauthorised absence occurs and where a pupil is stopped with parents / carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

It is important that you ensure that your child(ren) attend school regularly and if your child is absent from school you must make the school fully aware of the circumstances. Please remember that schools are limited in the reasons they can accept for absences and they are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil is regularly missing school for unacceptable reasons.

If you are concerned about your child's school attendance it is important that you contact your child's school as soon as possible to discuss the problem.

Thank you for your support in this matter.
Yours sincerely



Margaret Smith
Lead Attendance Officer

Notification of leave



Name of pupil: Date of birth:

Tutor group:

Proposed dates of absence:

Reason for absence:

It is the policy of the Suffolk Local Authority not to authorise any holiday's in school term time. Furthermore if there are 8 unauthorised sessions (4 days in total) throughout the whole academic year you will receive a fixed penalty fine. (Guidance can be found on the Suffolk County website).

Samuel Ward Academy in line with the Local Authority Policy will only authorise holidays that meet the following criteria and only at the discretion of the Head of School.

Special or mitigating circumstances which indicate that the leave should be granted ie.: father/mother in armed forces and in some instances, farm workers.

Signed Parent/Guardian: Date:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL:

Leave for family holiday should **NOT** be authorised, unless the mitigating circumstances warrant authorisation. If the Local Authority has begun legal proceedings the holiday will **NOT** be authorised.

Checked by Inclusion Officer: Date:

Leave Authorised/Not Authorised by:
(Head of School)

Penalty Notices

Information for Parents and Carers

We offer a telephone interpreting service. To use it telephone: 08456066067
Leave your name, language and phone number and a translator will call you back.

What is a Penalty Notice?

The law says that parents/carers, whose children of compulsory school age, are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence and the parents/carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising Local Authorities to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

Suffolk County Council Education Attendance Service is responsible for deciding when to issue Penalty Notices.

When will a Penalty Notice be issued?

We aim to work with schools and parents [carers] to improve pupil attendance but will issue a Penalty Notice fine when unauthorised absence occurs

AND

Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine for unauthorised absence.

There is No Statutory Right of Appeal once a notice has been issued.

There are limited circumstances in which the fine may be withdrawn.

How do I pay and what happens if I do not pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice fine.
The penalty must be paid in full.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 28 days of the issue, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine up to £1000.

Payment of the Penalty Notice discharges your liability for the period to which the Notice relates.

What can I do to help my child attend school regularly?

- Send your child to school on time everyday
- If your child is unwell, contact the school on the first day of absence and return your child to school as soon as possible
- Make sure your child knows you do not approve of them missing school.
- Take holidays only during school holidays.
- Make sure your child goes to school with the correct uniform and equipment.
- Take an interest In your child's education
- Talk to staff as soon as any issues arise.

Suffolk County Council Is committed to providing all children with the best start In life and works hard to improve the attendance of children.

Tackling Non-Attendance:

- Increases children and young people's opportunities
- Increases children's attainment
- Makes children safer
- Reduces anti-social behaviour
- Reduces the risk of children becoming involved In crime and involved In alcohol and substance misuse

**Further Information about the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct
or your child's attendance please contact:**

Margaret Smith
Lead Attendance Officer

01473 265348

Nigel Shaddick
Senior Education Welfare Officer

01473 265364

OR

Your child's School