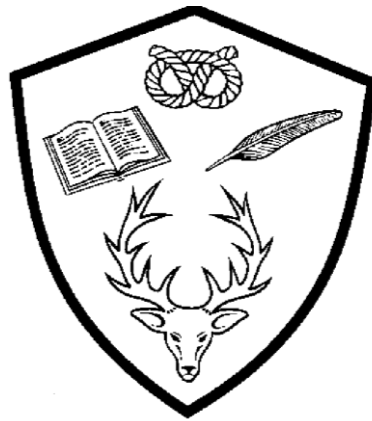


Chase Terrace Primary School

Attendance Policy



Together we Learn
Together we Aspire
Together we Succeed

Chase Terrace Primary School Attendance Policy

Person Responsible:	Deputy Headteacher
Approval Body:	Quality of Education Committee
Date of approval:	September 2023 (Approved by Chair of Governors using Chair's Power to Act)
Review date:	September 2024

Introduction and Background

Chase Terrace Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they are on time and attend school regularly every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately by rewarding individual and class achievements in assemblies.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Officers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good

punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern. Attendance will be monitored weekly. We will give parents/carers attendance details termly during parent consultation meetings. These will be colour coded to inform parents about the nature of their child's attendance. We will also report a child's annual attendance on their end of year school report. We will contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 95%.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

- The Department of Education has published research into the link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 (Published May 2022).
- The results demonstrate that the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.
- Of those who were persistently absent, 40.2% achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 83.9% of pupils with no missed sessions and 71.9% who missed between 0 and 5% (taken from 2018-2019 data).

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Information about the cause of any absence is always required by the school.

Reasons for absences:

Authorised

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as

- Illness;
- Medical appointments which unavoidably fall in school time;

- Emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised

These are absences for which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which are never properly explained;
- Children who are late after the register closes at 9:15am;
- Shopping trips;
- Birthdays;
- Looking after unwell parents;
- Visiting relatives;
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed (see Holidays in Term Time).

Sometimes a child may be reluctant to attend school. It is essential that any problems with regular attendance are addressed together by the school, the parents and the child. Parents can discuss attendance with the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher who will work with the family to understand the root of the problem. Other agencies such as the School Nurse or Education Welfare Officer can be consulted for advice and support.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Government policy defines 'persistent absenteeism' as when a child's attendance level is less than 90% of their schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level does considerable damage to any child's education. The school will require the full support and cooperation of parents/carers to tackle this.

All absences and their reasons are monitored weekly. We will inform parents/carers if their child has reached the persistent absence (PA) mark (90%), or is at risk of moving towards this attendance mark. A letter will be sent to inform parents if attendance falls below 95%.

If attendance falls below 92%, a subsequent letter will be sent to inform parents that absences will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. Where attendance was below 92% in the previous year, absences will not be authorised in the current academic year without medical evidence. Parents will be informed about this at the start of the academic year.

If attendance fails to improve and falls below 90%, parents will be informed that their child's absence is now categorised as persistent absence and where medical evidence cannot be presented, the absence will be unauthorised. 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence may result in a fine being issued.

All PA pupils will be given support to raise their attendance within school or from the School Nurse, Family Support Worker or Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent, the parent/carer needs to follow these procedures:

- Contact the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9:15 a.m. either by phone or in person. If necessary an answer phone is available to leave a message.
- If a child is registered as absent without notice, we will send a text message on the first day, asking you to contact the office to provide a reason for the absence.
- If they continue to be absent for more than a week an update check will be made.
- If absences persist we will invite parents/carers to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- A series of unauthorised absence will trigger the involvement of the EWO if the matter cannot be resolved within school.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Lessons start promptly, immediately after registration. If a child misses the start of the day they can lose out on vital information and contact with their teacher and their peers. This can be very embarrassing and stressful for the child and can lead to further absence. Good timekeeping is a vital skill which will help a child to progress through school and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8:45 a.m.**

- The children will arrive at school between 8.40-8.45am and children will come straight into school.
- Registers are marked electronically and your child will be recorded as absent from registration.
- All **late** children should report to the school office, where they will be recorded as **late** in the school register.
- At **9:15 a.m.** the register will be closed in accordance with Government Regulations.
- Any child arriving after this time should be signed into school by a parent/carer.
- A mark will be entered electronically to show the child is on site but will not count as a present mark. This is an **unauthorised** absence and may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.
- All children who have attended an **authorised** appointment should be signed back into school at the school office. A **medical** mark will be given in these circumstances.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be informed by letter and if there is no improvement you will be asked to meet the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to resolve the problem. You are invited to approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models in school.

The Education Welfare Officer

We encourage parents to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority (LA).

If there is no improvement as a result of their intervention, a parent may incur Penalty Notices or prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or LA.

Absence in term time

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In recognition of this, the law makes it an offence for a parent or carer to fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a school at which the child is a registered pupil, without good reason or the agreement of the school.

Leave of absence will not be granted unless in 'exceptional circumstances.' In such situations, an absence request form must be completed (Appendix 1) and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Penalty Notices are one of the sanctions available for unauthorised absence and offer a means of swift intervention, which can be used to combat attendance problems before they become entrenched. The Fixed Penalty Notice Checklist should be used to determine whether a Penalty Notice is appropriate, followed by a Penalty Notice Request form submitted to the local authority.

Chase Terrace Primary School, the Local Support Teams and, as appropriate, other partner agencies, will support parents and children to overcome barriers to regular attendance, through a range of intervention strategies.

Therefore, Penalty Notices and other sanctions will only be used where parental co-operation with this process is either absent or deemed to be insufficient to resolve the problem. They will be used as a means to support and challenge parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the Headteacher or in excess of the period authorised by the Headteacher (e.g. family holiday).
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions:

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.

Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

Leave not authorised by the Headteacher or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher.

The Local Authority will only issue Penalty Notices requested by a school in response to an unapproved leave of absence (including holiday related) resulting in unauthorised absence where the school has provided the necessary paperwork.

This paperwork should comprise:

- A copy of any school information available to parents which clearly states that parents may receive a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave (holiday) in term time.
- A copy of the leave of absence (holiday) request form submitted by the parent (s), and a copy of the response sent to the parent(s) by school. In the event the leave of absence (holiday) request is being denied the school's response should state the reason why the request is unauthorised and should again advise parent (s) that they may receive a Penalty Notice if they take their child out of school and that the Local Authority will be advised of the unauthorised leave of absence.
- In cases where the unauthorised leave of absence occurs without prior request from the parent (s), or is due to unauthorised absence beyond that which was agreed, the school should include all correspondence sent to the parent(s) to explore the unauthorised absence.
- Relevant pupil attendance registration certificate signed by the Headteacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that non-attendance during the period was unauthorised.
- Completed and signed penalty notice request form.

Pupils who have persistent unauthorised absences/lateness

As part of this process the parent(s) will first be issued with a 20 day notice period, clearly advising that if unauthorised absence / lateness occurs in this 20 day period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. This is to allow the parents a further period to address their child's irregular attendance by working with the school or other agencies. It is part of a scaled approach, and affords the parents an opportunity to avoid receiving a penalty notice. This is seen as good practice and integral to a proportionate response.

Therefore, the process is as follows:

- School completes and signs a penalty notice request form.
- School provides pupil attendance registration certificate signed by the Headteacher / Principal – or their nominated deputy – confirming that non-attendance / lateness during the period was unauthorised.
- School provides an assessment and plan which demonstrates that the use of a Penalty Notice is now the appropriate action to improve the child's school attendance / punctuality.
- The local authority issues a 20 day Warning Notice to the parent (s) advising them of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and that the child must have no unauthorised absence / lateness during the set period.
- If there are unauthorised absences / lateness in the period and after due consideration of the facts of the case with the school, issue a Penalty Notice through the post.

Please note:

Where the Penalty Notice is requested from a school in response to a leave of absence (holiday) related unauthorised absence, or is in relation to an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the formal warning letter and 20 day improvement period will not apply.

All Penalty Notices are entered onto a database maintained by Families First to ensure that no duplicate Penalty Notices are issued.

Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.

Excluded Pupils

The parent of the excluded pupil must ensure that the pupil is not present in a public place at any time during school hours on a day that he / she is excluded, up to and including the first 5 days or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates.

If the excluded pupil is present in a public place at any time during school hours on a school day specified above the parent commits an offence under section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

In such cases the school should provide:

- A copy of the letter required to be sent to parent(s) pursuant to s.104 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 warning them to ensure that the child is not permitted to be present in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.
- Robust and reliable evidence in the form of a witness statement, stating how the child is known to the witness, where the child was seen including the date and time.

Please note if the case is contested the witness may be required to give evidence in court.

Who may issue / request a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice may only be issued by authorised LA staff. In Staffordshire this will be members of the local support team, Education Welfare.

A Penalty Notice may be requested by a Headteacher / principal and school staff authorised by them, a police officer during a truancy sweep under the provision of Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

The designated officers within the local support team will be the only individuals permitted to issue Penalty Notices in the Staffordshire area. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, avoid duplication of issue and allow schools to maintain good relationships with parents and ensure that they reinforce other enforcement sanctions.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an instant action, e.g. during a truancy sweep. This will enable officers to ensure that all evidential requirements are in place, duplication of issue is avoided and to limit the health and safety risks associated with delivering such notices by hand.

Where schools, police or neighbouring local authorities ask Staffordshire County Council to issue a Penalty Notice, their request will be investigated and actioned by the local support team provided that:

- The circumstances of the case meet the criteria specified in this Code of Conduct.
- The pupil is registered at a Staffordshire School.
- All necessary evidence is provided to Families First to establish an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 has been committed.
- Issuing a Penalty Notice would not conflict with another intervention strategy already in place or another enforcement sanction already being processed; and
- There is an assessment and plan which demonstrates that the use of a Penalty Notice is now the appropriate action to improve the child's school attendance (not required in the case of unauthorised leave of absence).

The local support team will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt.

Truancy Sweep

A Penalty Notice will only be issued after due consideration, when all facts are known and the threshold for serving the notice has been met.

Information should be given to anyone stopped on a truancy sweep (pupil and/or parent) about the possible support and sanctions used to address non-attendance.

Criteria for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice may be withdrawn if the local support team is satisfied that:

- The Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to this Code of Conduct.
- The Penalty Notice contained material errors.
- The evidence demonstrates that the Penalty Notice should not have been issued, e.g. medical evidence.

Representation

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice. However, the parent will be advised when they receive the warning that they may make representation to the County Manager for Education within the local support team if they believe one of the above criteria has been met. This will then be investigated and the parent(s) informed of the outcome either to withdraw or uphold the penalty notice. Please note - in the case of a material error, the penalty notice may be re-issued with the appropriate corrections made.

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice; (Appendix B).
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's or carer's liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120; and
- The County Council retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Payments will not be accepted in part or by instalments.

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Penalty Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Policy and Publicity

- Identifying information about Penalty Notices issued to particular parents or specific children should not be made public;
- Issuing of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy;
- School attendance policies should include information on the issuing of Penalty Notices and this should be available to parents;
- The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional or public information material.

Reporting & Review:

The local support team will:

- Report at regular intervals to the Headteacher forum groups (Primary, Secondary, Middle and Special) and Staffordshire Police on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices;
- Make regular reports to Staffordshire County Council on attendance matters which will include Penalty Notice use; and
- Review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals and amend the Protocol as appropriate.

School Targets

	2018-2019	2019-2020 (up to Feb half term due to Covid 19)	2020-2021 (Covid19 disruption)	2021-2022	2022-2023	Target 2023-2024
Overall attendance	94.6%	95.4%	94.2%	91.3%	91.8%	96%
Authorised absence	3.7%	2.8%	3%	5.3%	4.1%	2.3%
Unauthorised absence	1.8%	1.7%	2.8%	3.4%	4.3%	1.7%
Persistent Absence %	10%	9%	10%	30.7%	22.6%	17.2%
% Attendance of disadvantaged pupils	93.1%	93.4%	90.9%	88.8%	89.8%	96%
% of disadvantaged pupils persistently absent	18%	22%	26%	47.1%	29.1%	<14.5%

Children Missing Education

Parents' responsibilities:

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they are home educating, the school must delete the child's name from the admission register and inform the local authority. However, where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, the school should consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans or statements of special educational needs (SEN) can be home educated. Where the EHC plan or statement sets out SEN provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. Where the EHC plan or statement names a school or type of school as the place where the child should receive his or her education but the parent chooses to home educate their child, the local authority must assure itself that the provision being made by the parent is suitable. In such cases, the local authority must review the plan or statement annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's SEN continue to be met.

Schools' responsibilities:

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England statutory guidance.

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. For further information about Children Missing Education, refer to: [Children Missing Education \(DfE\)](#)

Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

Recording Legal Framework :

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010



Pupil request for leave of absence during term time – exceptional circumstances only

This form will be returned to parents after a request is made.

Pupil's Name _____ DOB _____ Class _____

Pupil's Name _____ DOB _____ Class _____

I request permission for the above named pupil/s to be granted leave during school term time.

The reason for this request is:

.....
.....
.....

Date of Absence: From..... to

No of school days:

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) full name(s)

School(s) attended.....

Parent/carer: Address: Signature Date	Parent/carer: Address: Signature Date
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For completion by Headteacher: <u>Your request is: Agreed/ Denied</u> Signed _____ Headteacher Dated _____
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Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However, head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.
10. If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a 12 week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child