



Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Families,

**RE: New National Attendance Policy and Penalty Fines for Absences**

Attendance and punctuality continue to be a key priority at Rockcliffe Manor.

We are writing to inform you of important changes to our attendance policy, in line with the newly released national framework from the Department for Education. These changes will come into effect immediately and have been introduced to support students' regular attendance, which is essential for their academic success and overall development.

**New Attendance Policy**

Under the updated guidelines, we emphasise the importance of consistent and punctual attendance. Every day of school is critical, and we expect students to be present unless they are ill or have other legitimate reasons for absence. Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly.

If your child is unable to attend school, you must notify the school as soon as possible, providing a reason for the absence. Please note that certain absences, including holidays taken during term time, will not be authorized except under exceptional circumstances.

Our new attendance policy can be found on our website.

**Penalty Fines for Unauthorised Absences**

As part of this new national framework, stricter penalties for unauthorised school absences have also been introduced. This is a national approach which schools must adhere to. If a child has an unauthorised absence, fines may be issued to parents or guardians. More information on this can be found on the next page.

**How We Can Work Together**

We understand that life can sometimes present unexpected challenges that may affect your child's attendance. If you are facing any difficulties that could impact their regular attendance, please contact us immediately so that we can offer support. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to ensure that every child has the best opportunity to succeed.

We believe that clear communication between home and school is key to making this policy effective and ensuring your child's educational experience is uninterrupted.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued commitment to your child's education. Should you have any questions or concerns about this new attendance policy or the associated fines, please feel free to reach out to our school office.

Yours sincerely

Nancy Cook  
Headteacher



## Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence Have Changed

A National Framework for Penalty Notices, has been introduced by the Department for Education and came into effect on the **19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**.

### There is Now a National Threshold

There will be a single consistent **national threshold** for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of **10 sessions** (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence, within a rolling **10 school week** period.

For example:

- a **5 day** holiday in term time (term time leave), would meet the national threshold.
- **5 days** of unauthorised absence due to irregular school attendance, would meet the national threshold
  - The 10 school week period can span different terms or school years.

### Who May Be Issued with a Penalty Notice?

#### Penalty Notices are Issued Per \*Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example:

- 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the absence, receiving 3 separate fines.

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount will be:

- £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.
- Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is considered and issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance, the fine amount 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 for Term Time Leave or Irregular school Attendance, a Penalty Notice will **not** be issued.

- The case will be referred to the Magistrate's Court for consideration.
  - Upon Prosecution a parent can receive a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500.

If you are experiencing difficulties in ensuring your child's regular school attendance, you are advised to speak with the Attendance Lead in your child's school, to address any support needs.

\*Parent is defined as the natural parent, the person with whom the child lives and/or has day to day care of the child

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)