

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave in Term Time – Supreme Court Judgement 06/04/17|

On 6th April 2017 the Supreme Court released their ruling on the case of Isle of Wight Council vs Jon Platt. The Court ruled in favour of the Isle of Wight Council in that they were right to prosecute Mr Platt for not securing his child's regular school attendance at school. It clarified that Mr Platt should have been found guilty, unless one of the statutory exceptions applied (the absence was due to authorised leave, illness or religious observance). Mr Platt had taken his daughter out of school for seven days without the school's permission and the local authority had issued him with a penalty notice. In Lancashire, we will continue to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence in accordance with our code of conduct.

Eccleston Primary School (as in a large number of schools in Lancashire) has an attendance policy which reflects Lancashire's code of conduct. Every application for leave in term time is considered by the headteacher against the regulations, which states that headteachers can only authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. If the leave is not authorised and the threshold is met, Eccleston Primary School can request that LCC initiate the penalty notice procedure. If the penalty notice is not paid, the local authority will usually take the case to the Magistrate's Court, for the original offence (i.e. Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that if a child of compulsory school age 'fails to attend regularly' at the school where they are a registered pupil, the child's parent is guilty of an offence.



ECCLESTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL
incorporating
Beechbuds Pre-School

Your Child's Attendance Matters



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School Attendance Information for parents

The national average for attendance is over 96% and so our school attendance target is 97%.

Did you know that if your child's attendance falls below 90% they are classed as being a 'persistent absentee'?

We hope that this leaflet has been useful in explaining our schools approach to improving school attendance.

A complete version of the School Attendance Policy is available from the school website.

If you have any queries about the contents of this leaflet, or if you are concerned about your child's attendance please contact our school office.

We want to see all our pupils thriving in a changing world and regular attendance is vital in achieving this.

Ensuring School Attendance

At Eccleston Primary School, we expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We feel that the most important way to promote good attendance is to ensure that both pupils and parents have a positive relationship with school.

Research shows that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to do well in the future.

Regular attendance helps children to develop their confidence and to make and keep lasting friendships.



What is good school attendance?

Anything less than 100% attendance means that your child is missing out on their education.

For example, 90% attendance is the same as missing half a day each week, or one whole month a year off school.

Punctuality is also very important. School starts at 8.45am each morning.

Did you know, that being just 15 minutes late each morning means your child would miss the equivalent of 10 days from school each year.

If your child is absent

If you know your child is going to be absent from school, you should: Where possible, contact the school at the earliest opportunity to let them know explaining the reason for the absence (in advance if possible—for example if your child has a doctors appointment) School will contact parents if they are in any doubt as to the whereabouts of a child.

Leave in Term Time

Leave in term time is not a 'right'. Absence from school can have a serious impact on your child's education.

All requests for leave in term time must be made in advance of confirming any arrangements and may be granted at the Headteacher's discretion dependant on the circumstances.

Changes to the Regulations mean that schools can only authorise leave in term time if the circumstances surrounding the request are considered to be exceptional.

The next step:

If the attendance of a pupil is low, the parents will be contacted and asked to meet with the Headteacher to see how this can be improved. Support will be offered to both parents and pupils as required. The use of a 'Parent/School Agreement' may also be considered. If concerns remain, school may have to consider referral to external agencies, such as the Local Authority Pupil Attendance Support Team. The use of Penalty Notices may also be considered under certain circumstances, including where leave is taken without agreement.