



Essex County Council

Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold
<p>A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period• These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence• <u>For example</u>, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold• The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years
Who may be fined?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school• <u>For example</u>, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines
First Offence
<p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days• If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day
Second Offence (within 3 years)
<p>The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days
Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
<p>The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500• Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'