

02 August 2024

Department for Education's new attendance and punctuality regulations

Dear Parent/Carer

We wanted to make you aware of the update to statutory guidance for attendance which comes into place from 19th August 2024. We feel by sharing this information now you will be fully prepared for the new school year and to ensure your child is able to make the most of every school day. It will also allow you to communicate with our schools' Attendance Lead, Mrs Donnelly, if you have any current concerns or feel you may need support early in the next school year.

The Government believes, as do we, that parents/carers and school working together is the best way to overcome any barriers to your child attending regularly. However, it is important to note that statutory fines for parents have been put in place if a school feels a pupil is consistently absent from school without valid reason.

The guidance can be found here: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

We have also attached a useful poster from Portsmouth City Council for a quick and easy page to view outline of the new guidance.

These changes are national and apply to all schools. It is important that you are fully aware of these new policies, as they directly impact our pupils and families.

Unauthorised Absences and Penalty Notices

A fixed penalty notice can be issued if a pupil accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a window of 10 school weeks (A school day contains two sessions, morning and afternoon). This can be any combination of unauthorised absences. The 10-week period can span different terms or even different school years.

Penalty Notice Limits and Legal Intervention

A maximum of two penalty notices can be issued within a three-year period. If a third penalty notice is necessary within the same three-year period, legal intervention will take place.



Penalty Notice Charges

First penalty notices are charged at £160 per parent, per child. This amount is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Second penalty notices are charged at a flat rate of £180 per parent, per child.

Punctuality and Its Impact

Our morning registers must close at 9.15am at SIS and 8.55am at SJS.

This means that any child that arrives after this time is marked as unauthorised, unless we receive notification from a parent/carer. 10 unauthorised absence may result in a fixed penalty fine. Please see the table below which will hopefully serve as a useful reminder with reference to timings at the Solent Schools.

	Solent Infant School	Solent Junior School
Doors Open	8.50am	8.30am
Doors Close	9.00am	8.40am
Register Taken	9.00am <i>Any pupil arriving between 9 – 9.15am receives a late mark</i>	8.40am <i>Any pupil arriving between 8.40 – 8.55am receives a late mark</i>
Registers Formally Close	9.15am <i>Mark becomes a 'U' for unauthorised</i>	8.55am <i>Mark becomes a 'U' for unauthorised</i>

We understand that changes to attendance regulations can cause concern, but it is important to stress that these are national changes mandated by the DFE, not initiatives specific to the Solent Schools. We are committed to working with you to ensure the best educational outcomes for your children and to support their regular and punctual attendance. Please contact us at the earliest opportunity if you require and support or guidance in relation to your child's attendance or punctuality.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child's good attendance and punctuality, which are vital to their development and success.

Yours sincerely

L Wilby

Executive Headteacher

The Solent Schools





From 19 August 2024, the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices will apply

Per Parent, Per Child

E.g. 2 parents taking 3 children out of school for a leave of absence in term time would incur 3 penalty notices for each parent

S.576 Education Act 1996 defines a parent as all natural parents, not a natural parent but has parental responsibility, or has care of a child.

National Threshold

There will be a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools of 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week school period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absences.

The 10-week school period can span different terms or school years.

1

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a leave of absence in term time or irregular school attendance the Penalty Notice will be charged at: £160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days.

This is reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within the first 21 days.

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

2

Second Offence

(within 3 years of the first offence)

Where it has been deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice will be charge at:

£160 per parent per child to be paid within 28 days (there is no reduction for this)

(Unpaid Penalty Notices after 28 days will result in a prosecution)

3

Third Offence and any Further Offences

(within 3 years of the first offence)

The third time that any offence is committed and a sanction is requested for either a leave of absence or irregular attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.