

## **New Attendance Rules Parents Need to Know - September 2024**

In the Felpham and Bognor (FAB) locality of schools, we believe we offer a supportive approach to attendance and encourage our families to contact us should there be any barriers to your child arriving at school on time every day. Attendance at school is very important and long periods of absence from school is known to negatively affect children's learning development and well-being. The Department for Education have issued new attendance guidance for schools which will be implemented across the country from August 2024. Please ensure you read the following information.

This new guidance has been issued because prior to Covid, school absence had been on the decline, but since the pandemic, it appears attitudes towards attendance have changed and schools are seeing a steep increase in children being absent from school. The Government want to improve attendance figures in schools and Ministers have now published new guidance on managing school attendance that will become mandatory from September 2024.

Here's what you need to know.

### **National Fixed Penalty Thresholds**

From September, schools will have to consider issuing a fixed penalty notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. They should "not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices". The threshold can be met with "any combination of unauthorised absence". For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

### **£80 Fines and Improvement Notices**

Absence fixed penalty notices charged to parents will rise from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. From Autumn term 2024, only two fixed penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Any notice thereafter will automatically be charged at £160. Parents will also receive "improvement notices", where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with education and improve their child's attendance before a fixed penalty notice is issued.

The Government has also stated that fixed penalty notices can be issued for **less** than this threshold should circumstances arise, offering details of when this would occur. For example, a parent taking steps to avoid the use of a fixed penalty notice by taking their child out of school for nine sessions to go on holiday as this would mean the threshold would not be met.

### **Long-Term Sickness to be Flagged with Local Authorities**

Schools will have to give councils the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days. Schools will also be "expected to inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school".

### **Mental Health Awareness**

All schools should now be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

