

03 October 2024

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to inform you of upcoming changes to national school attendance procedures, which will affect schools in Reading with effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

A revised version of Working together to improve school attendance was published from the Department for Education in February 2024, with effect from 19th August 2024. There are a number of changes that will affect the way we work with families, including promoting a 'support first' approach in all aspects of addressing issues regarding children's attendance, modernising school attendance and admission registers, and a new National Framework for Penalty Notices to improve consistency of enforcement across the country.

Our local code of conduct has been updated here [BFFC Code of Conduct from 19th August 2024](#) to reflect the changes of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices. Significant changes to note are the increase to the fixed penalty notice amount:

-£160 for the first penalty notice (per parent, per child) if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 (per parent, per child) when paid within 21 days.

-A flat rate of £160 (per parent, per child) for a second penalty notice within a three-year period.

AND

The timeframe in which they can be issued for has also been reduced. A fixed penalty notice may be considered if a pupil is absent without authorisation for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks.

Here at Cranbury College, we aim to support students who are struggling with their attendance. For those students whose attendance is not considered satisfactory a support plan will be put in place to work with students and families to help identify and remove barriers to poor attendance.

We aim to encourage a positive attitude towards attendance by using a variety of rewards to recognise good and improved attendance. The Inclusion Team have positive roles in assisting those who are potential school refusers. Non-attendance will usually be addressed by the Attendance Officer in the first instance but will be escalated to an Inclusion Leader and/or the Local Authority Attendance Officer if there is no improvement over a monitored period of time.

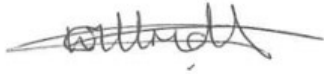
Students who miss school through accident, injury or ill health often worry about the work being missed and about travelling around the busy school site on their return. The Inclusion Team can coordinate work to be carried out at home (if the absence period is going to be longer than a week) and offer support to the student on their return. These members of staff will also be in close contact with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and other outside medical and support agencies, if necessary.



Support for parents is also available and we aim to keep you fully informed about your child's behaviour, attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year. The school will work in partnership with parents to improve attendance through meetings, attendance support plans and encourage parents to make use of outside agencies and parenting classes, where appropriate.

Our school attendance policy is available on our website and will be update from September 2024 with the new guidance. If, however, you would like to discuss any queries relating to attendance or the new changes set out in this letter then please contact Charlotte Baggley-Deputy Headteacher.

Yours sincerely



**Mrs C Willmott**  
Headteacher



## GOOD ATTENDANCE MEANS ATTENDING AT LEAST 90% OF THE TIME

### Recent Changes to Attendance

Please be aware of the recent update from Brighter Futures for Children regarding Student Attendance. From 19th August 2024, Penalty Notice fines for absence from School increased to £160 for each parent, for each child. You can be fine if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks for things like:

- Being late after the register has closed
- Truancy
- Taking a holiday without permission from school
- If a Headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

### Understanding how lateness impacts learning time

- If your 15 minutes late every day you lose 2 weeks of learning by the end of the school year
- 90% attendance may look impressive but it means missing 19 days of education a year
- Two school days missed each month during your school life adds up to one whole year of school lost
- When you're older, colleges and employers can ask to see your school attendance record

## The Law is Changing

### What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, from August 2024, only two Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three-year rolling period and any second Penalty Notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. Any further offences may result in criminal prosecution. The law will be clear that where a Penalty Notice threshold met - in each individual case the school must consider if a Penalty Notice is appropriate.

### Ten Sessions of Unauthorised Absence

A school day has two sessions: one morning and one afternoon session per day Penalty Notice fines may be issues for any term-time absences that are unauthorised (for example, a five day term-time holiday or four sessions of term-time holiday plus six sessions of arriving late after the register closes) - whether these absences are taken consecutively or cumulatively over a rolling period of ten school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. The period of ten school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g two sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further eight within the Autumn Term).

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days) Reduced to: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

### Second Offence (in a three-year rolling period)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance to the same parent for the same child the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child (if paid within 28 days) There is no reduction in the amount

### Third Offence or Any Further Offences (in a three year rolling period)

The third time an offence is committed for a Term-Time Leave of Absence or irregular attendance by the same parent for the same child (including those by other Local Authorities a Penalty Notice will NOT be issued but will be referred to the Local Authorities' Education Welfare Service for Prosecution which may result in fines of up to £2,500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in a Magistrate's Court can show on a parent's future DBS certificate. Local Authorities have the discretion to issue Penalty Notice fines before the above threshold is met in cases where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term-time holidays below the threshold, or for repeated absences for birthdays or other family events.