

4th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR ATTENDANCE

Here at Long Sutton Primary School, we believe that if a child is to make the best progress they can, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We are grateful for the continued positive partnership we enjoy between parents and school, ensuring the very best outcomes and opportunities for children to flourish.

| Attendance Percentage | Description |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 96 to 100% | As expected |
| 91 to 95.9% | At risk of persistent absence |
| 80 to 90.9% | Persistent absence |
| 50.9 to 79.9% | At risk of severe absence |
| Below 50% | Severe absence |

The Department for Education has issued updated statutory guidance which comes into effect on 19 August 2024. Part of a school's duty is to remind parents of their legal responsibility to ensure a high level of attendance for their child/ren. When attendance is poor (below 90%) for those children of compulsory school age i.e. the term in which they turn five, a Penalty Notice may be issued. Please be advised that this letter acts as a warning letter until September 2026.

To request a leave of absence from school for your child/ren, you should apply at least 14 days in advance by contacting the school office in writing via email. Any exceptional circumstances that you would like to be considered must be clearly set out in the written request. You must only then remove your child/ren if the absence has been authorised and notified to you in writing.

I am unable to authorise a request for a leave of absence when the reason for the absence is a family holiday. In circumstances deemed exceptional by me, some requests (or parts of) may be granted although this is extremely rare.

Please accept this letter to you as a formal warning that if you remove your child/ren from school during term time whether you have requested the leave or not and when it is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the school, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the local authority. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in further legal action being taken against you by the local authority.

A Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty of either £160.00 or £80.00 per parent per child for a 1st offence if paid within the specific timeframe.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Gray". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Miss S Gray

Headteacher