

Attendance & Children Out of school Team

Delamere House
Floor 5
CW1 2BL

1st November 2023

30 October 2023

Dear Parent,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Stephanie Beeston, and I am part of the Attendance and Children Out of School Team at Cheshire East Borough Council. With over 15 years of experience working with children and families, I am deeply committed to making a positive impact on children's lives and helping them reach their full potential.



I am currently working Alderley Edge Community Primary School to ensure that every pupil has access to a full-time education by addressing barriers to school attendance. This involves home visits, meetings with pupils and their families, and following the Department for Education's guidance to provide the necessary support.

As part of our efforts, we will be closely monitoring school attendance for every child. I may reach out to you under certain circumstances:

- If your child is consistently late for school.
- If your child has unauthorised absences with no acceptable reason communicated to the school.
- If you request a holiday during term time that the school cannot authorise.
- If your child is frequently absent due to illness.

Please rest assured that our goal is to understand the reasons behind these absences, assess if additional support is needed, and work collaboratively with you to ensure your child maintains positive school attendance.

OFFICIAL

Irregular Attendance

In some cases of irregular school attendance, our team may need to issue Penalty Notices. I want to emphasize that our intention is to avoid this whenever possible and work with you to prevent such actions.

Irregular school attendance is a legal matter, and it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Communication with the school about absences is essential, and a precise reason for the absence is required.

Late arrivals after the register opens will result in a late mark, while arriving after the register closes will lead to an unauthorised absence. If a pupil accumulates 10 unauthorised sessions within 2 half terms, the school may apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice warning period. However, prior to this step, you will receive communication from the school, and either myself or a school staff member will discuss concerns with you.

Our primary objective is to support you, address concerns early, and ensure that your child has a positive experience at school, attending regularly to achieve their full potential. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or require further information. We are here to assist you in any way we can.

Holiday's during term time

The Department for Education only allows schools to authorise a leave of absence in 'exceptional' circumstances. Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. An application for leave of absence should not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.

The following are not usually accepted as exceptional circumstances:

- *Cheaper holidays
- *Restrictions by employers on when annual leave can be taken
- *Someone booked the wrong date
- *Differences in dates of school holidays at different schools

If a child is absent from school for a leave of absence which school are unable to authorise, the school is required to request that the Local Authority consider issuing a Penalty Notice. This is done if there are 5 days (10 school sessions) of unauthorised leave. Please note that this does not have to be all taken together. The table below shows the financial cost of a Penalty Notice:

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

PENALTIES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
TIMELINE	ONE CHILD	TWO CHILDREN
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent/guardian	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent/guardian	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear in the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure you child's regular attendance.	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance.

Kind regards



Stephanie Beeston
 Education Family Support Worker
 Attendance and Children Out of School

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL