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to All parents/carers of children at all Wirral Schools    date    July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**

The guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2022 to all schools, regardless of their status, and Local Authorities in relation to School Attendance has now been updated and becomes statutory from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

The guidance not only places responsibilities on schools, including governing bodies, and Local Authorities but also reminds parents of their responsibilities. In supporting all of our schools to improve their attendance we would like to highlight the expectations on parents in relation to school attendance and encourage you to work with your child's school if there should be any concerns or issues impacting on attendance. Information on the school's procedures and who to contact regarding attendance should be available on your child's school website over the coming weeks as schools prepare for the guidance becoming statutory in September 2024.

The expectations on parents are:

- That you will ensure that your child attends school regularly which was defined by the Supreme Court in 2017 as every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies and that you notify the school as soon as possible when your child has to be unexpectedly absent
- That you only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and that you do so in advance
- That where possible you book medical appointments around the school day but when this cannot be avoided and your child has an appointment in school time you notify the school in advance
- That you work with your child's school and the Local Authority to help with the understanding of any barriers to your child attending school regularly
- That you engage with support offered including such things as accessing Family Toolbox ( [Family Toolbox - Tips and tools for family life in Wirral](#)) or your child accessing Zillo ( [zillowirral](#)) or attending meetings to prevent the need for more formal support including legal intervention

In addition to outlining the expectations on parents, schools and Local Authorities, the Department for Education has also made changes to penalty notices as you may have seen in the media.

The cost of each penalty notice will increase for any offences committed after 19<sup>th</sup> August to £80 if paid within 21 days and £160 if paid between day 22 and day 28 after being issued for the first offence.

One of the changes introduced from 19<sup>th</sup> August is that, where a parent takes the child out of school and commits a second offence within a rolling three-year period, the penalty notice amount will automatically be set at the £160. For any third offence in the rolling three-year period, there will be no penalty notice but there will be a prosecution.

Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child.

These changes do not take away the possibility of the Local Authority going straight to prosecution for a second offence where a penalty notice has been issued previously and not paid resulting in a prosecution.

You may find this link about penalty notices helpful:

[Fines for parents for taking children out of school: What you need to know – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

You may also find this link to the Statutory Guidance helpful as well:

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Working together, we can make sure that every child has the opportunity to succeed and have the bright future they deserve.

On behalf of the staff in your child's school, and staff in schools across the Wirral, I would like to thank you in anticipation for your cooperation as schools continue to support your child and promote good attendance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Backhouse', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**James Backhouse**  
**Assistant Director - Education**