

Penalty Notice Information for Parents and Carers

Suffolk County Council is committed to providing all children with the best start in life and works hard to improve the attendance of children.

Addressing Non-Attendance at School

- Increases children and young people's attainment. Statistics and research tell us that non-attendance impacts upon children's abilities to achieve A – C grades in their public examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Helps to keep children safe
- Reduces anti-social behaviour
- Reduces the risk of children becoming involved in crime and involved in alcohol and substance misuse

What can I do to help my child attend school regularly?

- *Send your child to school on time every day*
- *If your child is unwell, contact the school on the first day of absence and return your child to school as soon as possible*
- *Make sure your child knows you do not approve of them missing school.*
- ***Take holidays only during school holidays.***
- *Make sure your child goes to school with the correct uniform and equipment.*
- *Take an interest in your child's education*
- *Talk to staff as soon as any issues arise.*

What is a Penalty Notice?

The law says that parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age and absent from school without good reason are committing an offence and the parents/carers maybe prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 authorising Local Authorities to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

Schools decide whether they will adopt Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. If the protocol is adopted by the school they can then refer any unauthorised pupil absence to the Lead Attendance Officer at Suffolk County Council. If the referral is appropriate, the Lead Attendance Officer will process the referral and issue a Penalty Notice.

When will a Penalty Notice be issued?

The Education Attendance Service aim to support schools/ Academies and parents/carers to improve pupil attendance but Suffolk County Council will issue a Penalty Notice once a referral from a school has been received when:

Unauthorised absence has occurred from school

OR

Where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

Suffolk County Council will issue each parent/carer with a Penalty Notice fine for each child who has unauthorised absence.

There is No Statutory Right of Appeal once a notice has been issued.

There are limited circumstances in which the fine may be withdrawn. Details of which can be found in the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct 2014

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/education-and-careers/pupil-welfare-and-support/school-attendance-penalty-notice/>

How do I pay and what happens if I do not pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice.

The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days. The penalty must be paid in full and not by instalments.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 28 days of the issue, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine up to £1000.

Payment of the Penalty Notice discharges parents/carers liability for the period to which the Penalty Notice relates.

For further information about the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct or your child's attendance please contact your child's school in the first instance.

If you require an interpreting service for this leaflet, Suffolk County Council can support this, please contact us on the following number: 03456 066 067