

5th September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence - Guidance for Parents & Carers
Regular school attendance and Parent/Carer's legal responsibilities

At The Nicholas Hamond Academy our aim is to collaborate with parents and carers to ensure that all our students receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents and carers about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The important legal information – New from August 19th 2024: The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents or carers have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent/carers, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a student's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s or carers have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent/carers includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s or carers with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s or carers who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent or carers has applied for a leave of absence).

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The first penalty notice issued to a parent or carer for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent or carer for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance.**

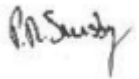
Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence: [Working together to improve school attendance](#) advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance: If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact myself or the relevant Head of Year.

Yours faithfully



Mr P. Sneesby
Attendance and Welfare Officer

Attendance Information

- 1 day = 2 sessions
- There are 365 days in a year, students should attend 190 days – every day school is open
- Being late (after the registers have closed) counts as an absence

What is Excellent Attendance?

97% and above Excellent	95% to 97% Good	Less than 95% Concerning	Less than 90% Persistent Absence/ Critical	Less than 50% Severely Absent/ Critical
No more than 6 days/12 sessions absent in a year	No more than 10 days/20 sessions absent in a year	More than 10 days/20 sessions absent in a year	19 days/38 sessions or more absent from school in a year	95 days/190 sessions or more absent in a year

Days off school add up to lost learning...

There are 175 non-school days each year. That's 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments.

1 or 2 days absent a week might not seem like much, but...

If your child misses...	That's equal to...	Which is...	Over 13 years of schooling, that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 and a half years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 and a half years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

Think it won't matter if your child is late 10 minutes a day?

Only missing just...	That equals...	Which is...	Over 13 years of schooling, that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 and a half weeks per year	Nearly half a year
20 minutes per day	1 hour 40 minutes per week	Over 2 and a half weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 and a half year
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 and a half years

How We Can Help

- Meet with you to discuss reasonable adjustments the school can make to support regular school attendance
- Develop a support plan
- Make referrals to other agencies and professionals for support