

4 September 2025

Dear all

I wanted to inform you all of the new Department for Education and Local Authority guidance around the use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in relation to pupil attendance and includes an increase in the fine, together with the process of the first, second and third FPN in a three-year rolling period and how the Local Authority will address each of them.

The new guidance now includes schools referring unauthorised absences to the Local Authority where a child is taken out of school for eight or nine unauthorised sessions (four or four and a half days) in order to avoid the 10-session threshold. The Department for Education communicated on 24 June 2025:

'The Government has also directed fixed penalty notices can be issued for less than this threshold (10 sessions) should circumstances direct, offering details of when this would occur. For example, a parent taking steps to avoid the use of a fixed penalty notice by taking their child out of school for 9 sessions as this would mean the threshold would not be met.'

If the Local Authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents take several term-time holidays below threshold, or a four day absence during a week which includes an Inset day or a Bank Holiday. The West Sussex Code of Conduct allows the Local Authority to use this discretion under point 16 as follows:

If in an individual case the Local Authority (or other authorised officer) believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the National threshold is met.

Therefore, from September 2025, if a child is absent for a holiday for eight or nine sessions without authority during a week which includes an Inset day or a Bank Holiday, the school should report this absence to the Local Authority for consideration of an FPN. Our Attendance Policy and Holiday Request form will be updated with this information. An updated FPN leaflet for further information can be found on the Bulletin page of our website.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Louise New
Executive Principal