

## CHANGES TO FINES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

With the introduction of the new National Framework for penalty notices, the following changes will come into force for fixed penalty notice fines issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools after 19 August 2024.

***Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in lieu of prosecution. The decision on whether to issue an FPN or prosecute rests with the Local Authority and is made on a case-by-case basis.***

### **National threshold**

There will be a single, consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to five full school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example: a five-day holiday would meet the national threshold.  
The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

### **Who may be fined?**

Penalty notice fines are issued to each parent who allows their child/young person to be absent from school.

For example: three siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving three separate fines.

### **First offence**

The first time a penalty notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday, the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child/young person if paid within 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

### **Second offence (within three years)**

The second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be: £160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child/young person, payable within 28 days.

### **Third offence and any further offences (within three years)**

The third time an offence is committed, a penalty notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns.

This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court.

Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months.

Please note any monies collected through fines come back to Cumberland Council to facilitate attendance support and not to schools.