Essex County Council

**Helping Parents understand Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance**

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines being issued for unauthorised absences recorded by schools

| **National Threshold** |
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| A single consistent national threshold for when a Penalty Notice must be considered by ALL schools in England, this is:<br>• 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period<br>• These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence<br>• For example, a 5-day unauthorised leave of absence would meet the national threshold<br>• The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years |

| **Who may be fined?** |
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| • Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school<br>• For example, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines |

| **First Offence** |
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| The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:<br>• £80 per parent, per child if paid **within 21 days**<br>• If **not paid within 21 days**, the fine will increase to **£160 per parent, per child**, payable between the 22nd and 28th day |

| **Second Offence (within 3 years)** |
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| The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:<br>• £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days |

| **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)** |
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| The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented **straight to the Magistrate's Court**<br>• **Prosecution** can result in **criminal records** and **fines of up to £2,500**<br>• Cases found **guilty** in a **Magistrates Court** can show on the parent's future DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a **'failure to safeguard a child's education'** |