



# GLENWOOD SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DFE) UPDATED RULES ON FIXED PENALTY NOTICES - (OTHERWISE KNOWN AS A FINE)**

As explained in my previous communication to you, I have always considered each Leave of Absence request on an individual basis and I have based my decision as to whether to authorise or unauthorise the absence based on the reason or nature of the exceptional circumstance that you have disclosed on the request form.

From September 2024 the Department for Education (DfE) has updated their regulation and guidance as part of the government's efforts to increase the national rate of attendance that has been falling considerably since Covid.

Part of their strategy is to introduce a national framework for the issuing of penalty notices and increase the fines which have remained consistent since 2012. This aims to reduce the amount of Leave of Absence requests and unauthorised absences. It is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence request will be authorised for a holiday and you should ensure that your request has been authorised prior to booking any holiday.

The DfE's guidance to schools is that they "do not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance."

### Understanding the DfE's new 'escalation' process to Penalty Notices

If your child has reached the national threshold for a penalty notice for unauthorised absence from school, the school must issue all parents with parental responsibility with a penalty notice:

- The new national threshold is that all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.
- Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.
- The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

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The most important changes I feel that are appropriate to highlight to you is that alongside the national increase to the fines (see below), fines for parents will be capped at 2 penalty notices within any 3-year period. Once this limit has been reached, and where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken by the Local Authority instead.

- First penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
- Second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Third time within those 3 years, alternative action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.
- If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Further information can be found on the DfE's Education Hub using the link below;  
DfE Education Hub - fines for parents taking children out of school - what you need to know

Please can I also request that you take time to read our updated Attendance Policy, effective from September 2024: <https://glenwoodschoolemsworth.co.uk/policies/> .

Yours faithfully



Mrs J Payne  
Headteacher



A University of Chichester  
ITT Partner School

