Dear Parent/Carer

National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Attendance

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Absence came into effect on the 19th August 2024. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to cause improved attendance without the need for a criminal prosecution.

The National Framework aims to:

. **Make penalty notices more effective** by ensuring they are only used in cases where they are the most appropriate tool.
. **Prioritise the support first approach** by expecting support to be used in cases where it is appropriate.
. **Improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England** by introducing a new national threshold at which they are considered.
. **Improve the deterrent effect of a penalty notice** by increasing the amount and introducing a new national limit of 2 penalty notices within a 3 year period.

The National Framework includes:

. A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024.

. Unauthorised absence sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or sporadic (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The 10 school week period may span different terms or school years.

. The option of using a 'Notice to Improve' where support is appropriate to provide a final opportunity to engage with support to prevent a penalty notice being issued.

. The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days. (this is less than an inflationary rise since 2013)

. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Capenhurst Lane, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 7AQ
0151 329 0814
admin@ourladystar.cheshire.sch.uk
www.ourladystar.cheshire.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs L Finlay

. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The penalty notice system is not a money making scheme and local authorities do not have income targets. Monies should be first used for the administration of the penalty notice system and prosecution. Any revenues collected through the system must be ring fenced for attendance and any surplus must be paid to the Secretary of State.

If you're having trouble getting your child to go to school, the school will discuss attendance problems with you and should agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance. The Council offers support through Team around the Family (TAF) and Live Well.

Home | Live Well Cheshire West (cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)