



Head Teacher: Mrs. A. Young
Email: ckcaptaincook@mcschools.org.uk
Tel: 01642 315254
Web: www.captaincookprimary.co.uk

Captain Cook Primary School, Stokesley Road,
Marton, Middlesbrough. TS7 8DU

27th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carers

New DfE statutory attendance guidance - 'Attendance Counts'

I am writing to update you on the new rules relating to attendance and term time holidays.

There has been growing national concern regarding declining school attendance rates across the UK. In response, the Department for Education has introduced new statutory guidance, effective from August 2024, aimed at reducing term-time holidays and unauthorised absences.

Before any period of leave is taken parents must complete a 'Leave of Absence Request' form and submit it through the school office with any supporting evidence.

Any holiday/leisure related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.

The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.

A national limit of 2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) the Local Authority will investigate legal interventions such as prosecution.



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We recognise that these Penalty Notices may be unpopular with families, but it is important to inform you of these changes.

Nationally, Head Teachers are:

- not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and
- are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.

The law clearly expects Head Teachers to enforce these penalties strictly.

The new policy also states that all schools must consider issuing Penalty Notices if the criteria is met. This is a national statutory process and will be followed by all English state funded schools.

The 'H' code (authorised holiday) no longer exists in the new absence codes to reflect the changes in policy.

You can view the DfE Policy on the link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

School attendance is a high priority for everyone. The Local Authority and schools are committed to improving attendance to achieve the best outcomes for our children.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Mrs A Young
Head Teacher