



Important Changes Regarding School Attendance – Effective August 19th 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope this letter finds you well and you have had a wonderful, restful summer. We're reaching out to share some important updates regarding school attendance that will start from the beginning of term – Tuesday 3rd September 2024.

First and foremost, we want to express our gratitude for your ongoing support and cooperation. We know how much you care about your child's education, and we've always appreciated our partnership in ensuring our students thrive.

Historically, our school has taken a supportive and collaborative approach to improving attendance. We've never believed in fining parents, and have never done so; we have always aimed to work together to overcome any attendance challenges. However, the local authority and DFE are now asking us to adopt stricter measures, which may include fines if all other options have been exhausted.

We want to assure you that imposing fines is not something we believe in or wish to do. Our primary goal is to work with you to ensure high attendance levels for your child. We'll be here to support you with any resources or assistance you might need. Additionally, where possible, we will make sure to give you plenty of warning if your child's attendance is getting close to the point where a fine could be considered.

Communication is key, and we encourage you to reach out to us if you're facing any challenges that might affect your child's ability to attend school regularly. By working together, we can find solutions and ensure your child continues to have a consistent and enriching learning experience.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we adapt to these changes. We truly appreciate your support and are confident that, with our combined efforts, we can maintain the high standards of attendance that are essential for your child's success.

You can find the 'Working together to improve school attendance (from August 2024)' guidance online should you wish to find out more information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

There is further information, specific to Bristol City Council's policy around these changes which can be found below:

<https://www.ask.bristol.gov.uk/penalty-notice-fines-for-school-attendance-consultation>

If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to help!

Warm regards,

Alex Powell
Assistant Headteacher
Attendance Lead

FAQs

What are the trigger points?

There has now been a National Standard brought in by the government to ensure parity between schools and their approaches. This means that if your child misses 10 sessions in a 10 week rolling period, then this will be considered as a trigger point. Please note that a session is ½ a day so in this case, missing 5 days in a 10 week rolling period would be considered a trigger.

What happens if my child hits a trigger point?

When the threshold is reached, the school will consider carefully the appropriate response for each case whether that be issuing a Penalty Notice, providing support, issuing a Notice to Improve, or pursuing other legal interventions. As always, we will support parents as a priority as this, we feel, is the most appropriate response. Please be aware however, that under the new guidelines, schools must provide evidence as to why a fine has not been issued.

How much is a fine?

The first fine will be £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22-28 days. This is something that government have now increased and made consistent across the whole country.

How many times could I be fined?

A maximum of twice. Following this the government ask the school to consider further action including legal.

The government have stated that 'Fines may be issued for the same parent and the same child within a rolling three-year period, after which alternative actions, such as prosecution, should be considered.'

What happens if our child moves schools?

In cases where a pupil has moved to a different school or local authority within the three-year rolling period, local authorities will conduct cross-border checks to determine if any Penalty Notices have been issued in the previous three years.

What is the process for fines to occur?

- The school will inform you that you are at risk of meeting a trigger point prior to you doing so.
- If you still meet the trigger point a formal meeting will occur with the parents/guardians of the child(ren). This will be with the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher.
- Following the meeting one of the subsequent outcomes will occur:
 - o A support plan will be put in place to ensure the child's attendance improves.
 - o A fine notification will be sent to Bristol Council and fine will be issued.
 - o If a parent has already been fined twice in a 3 year rolling period then a formal consideration will need to be sent to Bristol City Council to seek a Supervision Family Order from the court.

How does attendance affect my child's education?

- Regular attendance is crucial for your child's learning and development. When your child attends school consistently, they have more opportunities to learn and engage with the material being taught. Each school day builds on the previous one, so missing even a few days can lead to gaps in understanding. This can make it harder for your child to keep up with their classmates and grasp new concepts.

Additionally, frequent absences can affect your child's ability to form strong relationships with their teachers and peers, which are important for both social and emotional development. Being present in class also helps your child develop good habits, like responsibility and time management, that are important for success in school and later in life.

In short, regular attendance helps ensure that your child gets the most out of their education, stays on track with their learning, and builds important life skills. If you're having trouble with your child's attendance, please reach out to us.

Overall Percentage	No. of days missed per <u>year</u>	No. of days missed over <u>career</u>
100%	0 days	0 days
96%	8.5 days	52 days
94%	11 days	78 days
92%	15 days (3 weeks)	104 days
90%	19.5 days (4 weeks)	131 days
80%	37 days (a whole term)	261 days