



DARELL PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Niton Road, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4LH

Headteacher: **Joe Porter**

Telephone: 020 8876 6721

E-mail: info@darell.richmond.sch.uk Web: www.darell.richmond.sch.uk

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Department of Education (DfE) has introduced new guidance for schools and Local Authorities (LAs) on managing school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices and amended the law. These changes come into effect on 19 August 2024, and all schools across the country will be expected to follow the new statutory guidance.

Support First

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. All schools are expected to promote school attendance and provide support if a child is not attending school regularly. This may mean that we raise the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a couple of days off ill. This is not because we don't believe you, but by working with you, we can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. Together, we may identify other underlying issues that are making your child reluctant to attend school and be able to help you and your child. For this to be successful, we need to work together.

National framework for penalty notices

The government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absences to provide consistency. The threshold for when a school should consider the next steps is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. (A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session.)

This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence, including term-time holidays, late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O), which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period. At this point, the school will consider if the attendance will improve with further support. They may then refer the case to the LA for formal monitoring. This may proceed to legal action if the attendance does not improve. Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school-age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school. The new costs and process are outlined below:

First Offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term-Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. It will be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years) -The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term-Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years) - The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court.

Term time holidays

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more, then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

To request term time absence from school you must complete the online form from:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZGZtKbRo6PFpkT066JNHizbhFOZdQtbaUN3Q8NUF-ETRGJA/viewform?usp=sf_link

New registration codes

The DfE has amended some of the codes to include numbers as well as letters. These new codes enable schools, LAs, and the DfE to better understand the reasons for absence.

For example:

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance.

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance.

The important thing for you as a parent is still the C, which means that the absence was authorised.

A new code has also been introduced for pupils who are on the school roll but are temporarily being provided with an alternative education by the local authority, such as a home tutor.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority.

Full details of all of the changes can be found by visiting the Government webpage:

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

Kind regards

Emma Claridge