

UPDATED
Attendance Guidance



**Important Information on
Attendance and
Penalty Notices 2024**



Attendance Guidance

Living life; life in all it's fullness. John 10:10

Hordle CE Primary School and Nursery is committed to working together with parents and carers to support our children in achieving their aspirations. We cannot overstate the importance of high levels of attendance on your child's learning, overall development and mental health and well-being. Attending school every day is more than just a routine—it is a vital part of your child's learning journey and establishes strong foundations for their future.

We are extremely grateful for your commitment as parents and carers to ensuring your child attends school. Whilst we always reiterate that we do not expect seriously unwell children to be brought into school, we do value and appreciate the efforts of parents in supporting children to attend when they feel a little 'under the weather' or have a sniffle. All our staff are trained to be vigilant and any member of the team would notify you if your child felt unwell during the day.

Targeting Attendance

In line with Government expectations, Hordle aims for all children to achieve at least 97% school attendance each year. Throughout the year, your child's attendance will be monitored and you can expect to receive notifications if your child's attendance drops below 95%.

If a child has an attendance rate of 90%, this is the equivalent of missing one day per fortnight. Over a full school year, this represents four full weeks of absence. For many children this level of absence can seriously hinder their progress with learning as they frequently miss lessons or blocks of lessons on curriculum content that may not be revisited for some time. We often find that when children return from frequent absences, they feel more anxious and less-confident in aspects of their learning.

Attendance and Well-being

At Hordle, whilst we believe that regular attendance is vital for your child's academic success, we also note the significant impact it has on children's personal development, mental health and well-being. When children attend school consistently, they not only benefit from high-quality teaching and learning, but also from the social interactions and routines that foster emotional resilience and a **sense of belonging** and **connectedness** to their peers.

Frequent unauthorised absences can have a significant impact on your child's social relationships. When a child misses school without a valid reason, they may find it difficult to stay connected with their friendship group, especially if they have missed shared learning or social experiences. Over time, this can lead to fragmented friendships and feelings of isolation as their friends move on with group dynamics.

Regular attendance helps children to maintain strong friendships, build social skills and feel more integrated within their peer groups.

We understand that attendance can sometimes be impacted by health concerns, including mental well-being. We actively encourage open communication between parents and the school. If your child is struggling, please don't hesitate to make contact with the class teacher so we can work together to support both you and your child.



Every School Day Counts



The rest of this leaflet is dedicated to unauthorised absence and the new **national, statutory** regulations on penalty notices. The information in this booklet is important and we encourage all parents and carers to please make sure they are familiar with the new penalty notice guidance. We hope you find this useful.

Yours faithfully,

Louise Trim
Headteacher

Unauthorised Absence

If a child fails to attend school without a valid reason, this is coded as an **unauthorised absence**. Where a number of unauthorised absences are accrued, schools are obliged to enforce statutory Penalty Notices in accordance with the guidance rolled out to schools under the Education Act 1996, Section 444A.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is a fine issued by the local authority as an alternative to prosecution. If the fine is paid, it will not require a court appearance or criminal record. Please note that if you are issued with a penalty notice and you refuse to pay the fine, you will be held accountable in a court of law.

Who can be issued with Penalty Notices?

Anyone with Parental Responsibility can be issued with a penalty notice. Please note that in a two-parent family, both parents will be fined for each child. In other words, if two children have met the threshold of unauthorised absence, the family will receive four fines in total, one for each parent for each child. This can include split families as both parents hold Parental Responsibility.

NEW CHANGES TO PENALTY NOTICES

Please note that **BRAND NEW** statutory regulations came into force on August 19th 2024. The information below aims to summarise the key changes that you should be aware of:

- When a child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent to five days) within a ten week **SCHOOL PERIOD**, the threshold for a penalty notice has been met.

NEW FINING CHARGES

	Paid within 21 days	Paid within 28 days	Not paid
First Penalty Notice OLD CHARGES	£60	£120	Escalation—possible court appearance
First Penalty Notice NEW CHARGES In force from September 1st 2024	£80	£160	Escalation—possible court appearance

However, there is now an added layer of escalation which means that if parents receive a **SECOND** penalty notice in a **three year period**, the fines increase **substantially**.

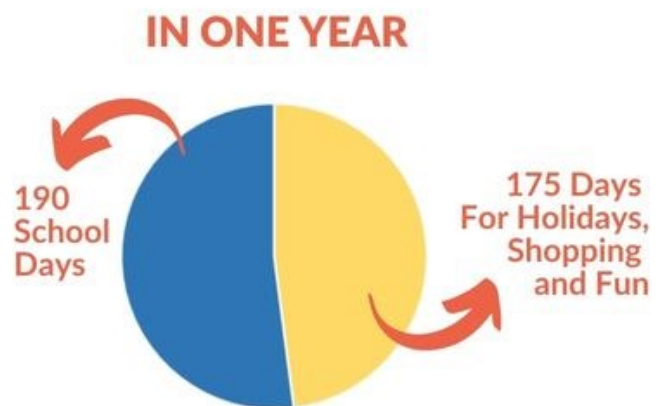
	Paid within 21 days	Paid within 28 days	Not paid
First Penalty Notice	£80	£160	Escalation—possible court appearance
Second Penalty Notice <i>Received within THREE YEARS of the first penalty notice</i>	£160 NO option for a smaller payment	£160	Escalation—possible court appearance
Third Penalty Notice <i>Received within THREE YEARS of the first penalty notice</i>	Prosecution or Legal Intervention		

Please note: A penalty notice is intended to change parental behaviour without the need for a criminal prosecution.

Unauthorised Attendance

What constitutes unauthorised attendance?

- Holiday
- Travel Abroad
- Days off for birthdays
- Days off to go shopping
- Feeling tired
- Bad weather
- Parent feeling unwell
- Car broken down
- School refusal



Authorised absences will only be granted for **exceptional** circumstances . Please note these are extremely rare. Travelling abroad, taking a holiday to visit family or taking a holiday in term time because it is more affordable is **NOT** considered to be exceptional and will not be authorised.

There are **175** days every year when your child is not in school. It is your responsibility as a parent or carer to ensure that holiday, travel and non-urgent medial appointments (dentist) are taken outside of school days.

Before requesting a leave of absence, please consider, 'Is this request for leave of absence **exceptional?**'

Honesty

Very rarely, we receive reports that families have had a child absent from school due to sickness but have in fact gone on holiday. Please note we have a duty of care to report these incidents to the Attendance and Inclusion Team. In the past, these instances have resulted in the retrospective assignment of unauthorised absence codes and triggered penalty notices.

