

18 July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach the end of this academic year, I want to write to thank you for working with your child's school in order to support them to make the most of their education by encouraging great school attendance. Whilst we know that we need to continue to work hard to improve attendance, we recognise that this is something that we do in partnership with you. Almost every child's attendance has either remained super, or it has improved this academic year compared to last year – thank you for your support and hard work as well.

I also write to share about the recent changes announced by the Department for Education regarding unauthorised absences during term time. These changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024. We welcome the removal of the “postcode lottery” approach to school attendance that has been in place up until now and are pleased to see that Local Authorities will all be bound to respond to absence from school in the same way. However, there are some significant changes that we wish to ensure you are aware of.

Please be aware of the following changes:

- Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences are rising  
From 19 August 2024, penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160 per parent per child.  
If paid within 21 days, the amount will be reduced to £80.
- Second Offence Penalty Notices are also rising:  
If a second penalty notice is issued for the same child within a 3-year period, the charge will be £160, with no discount, to be paid within 28 days.
- Threshold for Penalty Notices:  
A penalty notice will be considered if there are 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This includes late arrivals after the register closes (indicated on registers with a U code) – your child's school will advise you on each occasion that your child has arrived after registers have closed. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- Limit on Penalty Notices:  
A maximum of 2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent for the same child within a 3-year period. Any further offences may lead to prosecution or other legal interventions – up to and including an entry on DBS checks to indicate 'educational neglect'.

Neither your child's school, nor Three Spires Trust, receive any of the monies paid through penalty notices. All monies are received and retained by the Local Authority.

We hope this information helps clarify the new changes. Ensuring regular attendance is crucial for your child's education and development. For more details or if you have any questions, please contact your school's attendance officer directly.

Yours faithfully

Sarah Milne  
Director of Safeguarding and SEND

[threespirestrust.org](https://threespirestrust.org)

01785 526011 | [contact@threespirestrust.org](mailto:contact@threespirestrust.org) | [@3spirestrust](https://twitter.com/@3spirestrust)

New Beacon Building, Stafford Education & Enterprise Park, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0BF

Three Spires Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales. Company number: 13153266.  
Registered address: New Beacon Building, Stafford Education & Enterprise Park, Weston Road, Stafford, England ST18 0BF.