



Meadow High School

Royal Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex UB8 3QU

Telephone: (01895) 443310

Email: meadow@meadowhighschool.org

Website: www.meadowhighschool.org

Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Rigby

Deputy Headteacher (Royal Lane): Miss Michelle Taylor

Deputy Headteacher (Northwood Road): Miss Amy Willis

Thursday 5th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the start of the 2024-25 school year! I hope that you and your families have had a restful summer break. I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself as the new Attendance Officer at Meadow High School, I look forward to meeting with many of you over the next academic year and am thrilled to be working at this wonderful school.

I wanted to make you aware of some important attendance changes that have been imposed by the local authority. A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations will come into effect from August 2024, and we wanted to bring this to your attention, as it will affect when penalty notices are issued in Hillingdon. I have attached the changes and a FAQ sheet for your reference.

You play a vital role in your child's success at school. The first step to achievement is establishing excellent school attendance habits. As the Attendance Officer, I will promote daily attendance through incentives, awards, parent/carers education etc. I will be sharing attendance information with our school community throughout the year.

It is important that your child is present at school every day and on time. Here are some suggestions to establish positive attendance habits:

- Create morning and evening routines
- Where possible, schedule appointments during non-school hours
- Post school calendars and schedules in a visible place
- Help your child develop a positive attitude toward school by encouraging him/her to participate in school activities
- Communicate with myself and your child's teachers on a regular basis

Regular attendance helps pupils to feel part of the school community and enables them to develop good relationships with their peers and other members of the school community. This can have a positive impact on their wellbeing and help them to feel more settled in school.

I appreciate your support in ensuring your child comes to school consistently. I am here to work with you in achieving this goal and understand that each family's situation is unique.

I am excited to be part of the team at Meadow High School and look forward our collaborative journey ahead. If there is anything I can do to support your or your child, please feel free to contact me: tkelliher@meadowhighschool.org or by calling the school office on 01895 443310.

Yours sincerely,

Toni Kelliher
Attendance Officer
Meadow High School

Article 23:- 'A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community.'



Dear Parents and Carers

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE LAW REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES FOR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations will come into effect from 19 August 2024, and we wanted to bring this to your attention now, as it will affect when penalty notices are issued in Hillingdon.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.
3. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Please see FAQs below with more information about how the new rules may affect you.

We would like to thank parents and carers for their support in making sure that children do not miss any valuable learning time.

Yours sincerely,

Hillingdon Attendance Support Team, Hillingdon Council

FAQs

If I have been issued with a penalty notice before 19h August 2024, will this be counted if I am issued with another penalty notice from September onwards?

No, the new limits come into effect from 19 August 2024.

If I have already booked a holiday for next year, could I receive a penalty fine at the new higher rate?

Yes, if the absence has not been authorised by the Head Teacher of your child's school. Remember, only a Head Teacher can agree whether an absence can be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Who can be issued with a penalty notice?

- Each parent can receive a fine for each child who has had unauthorised absence from school.
- In education law, anyone who lives with a child and who has day-to-day care of the child is also considered to be a parent whether they are the biological parent or not. For example, this will include stepparents and partners.

Do the new rules only apply to holidays during term time?

No, it applies to all unauthorised absence from school including holidays. Unauthorised absence includes other absence that has not been agreed such as truancy, arriving late after the register has closed and failing to provide reasons for absence.

How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?

You must submit an Absence Request form at least 20 days before the proposed absence. It will be for your child's Head Teacher to make a decision as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

Do the 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have to be taken all at the same time before a penalty fine is issued?

No, a penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive and can span over two terms.

What happens if I am issued with a penalty fine and I don't pay it?

Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty fine is an opportunity for you to settle out of court. If you don't take this opportunity, you can be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

What should I do if I am worried about my child's attendance?

In the first instance you should contact your child's school and ask for advice on how they can support you to improve the situation.

