

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme for poor school attendance is in use in West Sussex. This page will offer you brief information on the Fixed Penalty Notice Scheme and what it could mean for you.

What is a fixed penalty notice?

It is a fine given for unauthorised absence from school.

Who issues them?

The Local Authority issues them through the Education Welfare Service (EWS), by first class post direct to your home.

When are they used?

- When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school days recorded as unauthorised absences in a 10 week period. Please note that **only** the Principal can authorise an absence from school.
- For an unauthorised holiday.
- For a pupil being in a public place during the first 5 days of an exclusion from school.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after registration has been completed).

Is warning given?

A warning letter will be sent by the College informing parents and students of our attendance concerns. The law changed on 1 May 2015 and **there is no longer a 15 day improvement period** given. Parents will be issued with a fine straight away.

What is the fine?

If paid within the first 21 days, the fine is **£60**. After that, the fine increases to **£120**, which must be paid within 28 days of the notice being issued.

How do I pay?

The information on how to pay is included on the Fixed Penalty Notice. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay within the 28 days, the Authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor school attendance by your child. If proven, a fine of up to £2500 and/or a parenting order or a community sentence could be enforced.

Can I appeal?

NO. There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued. You can make a representation once a warning has been issued should you wish.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Fixed Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

You won't be prosecuted for the period included in the Fixed Penalty Notice, however, a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance, each case is considered individually by the Education Welfare Service.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school regularly?

Yes - both the College and the Education Welfare Service can offer support and advice to help secure improvement in your child's attendance. It is important you seek help at the earliest opportunity.

*****REMEMBER*****

The Education Welfare Service would rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Fixed Penalty Notices or Court. They will only be used if this is the **ONLY** way of securing a child's attendance at school.

WSCC contact details

Penalty Officer: West Sussex Education Welfare

Tel: 01903 839227

Fax: 01903 839295