

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & PENALTY NOTICES

Information for parents and carers in Stoke-on-Trent

From 19 August 2024, a National Framework applies to school attendance penalty notices across England.

The framework continues to apply in the 2026/27 school year. Schools and the local authority must consider each case individually and use a **support-first** approach.

THE NATIONAL THRESHOLD

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-school-week period.

This can be any combination of unauthorised absence, including term-time holiday and arriving late after the register has closed.

When the threshold is met, a penalty notice must be considered, but the school should consider whether support or another attendance intervention is more appropriate.

FIRST PENALTY NOTICE

£80 if paid within 21 days of receipt.

If it is not paid within 21 days, the amount rises to **£160**.

If it remains unpaid after 28 days, the local authority must either prosecute for the original offence or withdraw the notice.

SECOND PENALTY NOTICE

£160 at the standard rate.

A second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within a rolling **3-year period** is charged at £160; there is no £80 reduction.

THIRD OCCURRENCE

A parent can receive a maximum of **two penalty notices** for the same child within a rolling 3-year period.

If the national threshold is met for a third or subsequent time within those 3 years, a third penalty notice cannot be issued. **Prosecution or another attendance intervention should be considered instead.**

PER PARENT, PER CHILD

Penalty notices are issued to each parent who is liable for the attendance offence, in respect of each absent child. For example, where two parents are liable for the absence of two children, each parent may receive a separate notice for each child.

TERM-TIME LEAVE

Only the headteacher can grant a leave of absence during term time, and only where the circumstances are considered exceptional. A family holiday during term time is not automatically an exceptional circumstance.

QUESTIONS OR SUPPORT WITH ATTENDANCE?

Stoke-on-Trent City Council Education Welfare Service

01782 235355 | Education.Welfare@stoke.gov.uk

Support should be considered before legal action where appropriate.

This poster summarises the national penalty notice framework and Stoke-on-Trent City Council information available at the time of publication. It is intended for general information and does not replace the school's attendance policy, the local authority's Code of Conduct, or the law.