



BOSTON
HIGH SCHOOL

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9th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance Procedures and Formal Fixed Penalty Warning

(This letter is sent to every parent of every child of compulsory school age.)

The past years have been unprecedented with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting every child's attendance and unfortunately for some their health. This letter is to reinforce this message to all parents and carers that attending school is compulsory. A student with attendance below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence and irrespective of the reason for any absence.

Please note:

- The school's expectation for attendance is 96% or above and this will now be continuously monitored for all students for the whole of the academic year.
- Parents/carers of students with attendance of less than 90% will be asked to attend an Attendance Panel and assurances will need to be made that the student's attendance will improve.
- Avoid making medical or other appointments during school hours. Where this is not possible please ensure that they attend school before/after the appointment.
- No medical appointments will be authorised without evidence (i.e. doctor's slip / prescription labels / hospital appointment letters / appointment texts / texts from medical practices seen by school staff).
- We are aware that some appointments are made on an emergency basis and will retrospectively amend records once the slips or prescription labels have been received.
- The school will not authorise a leave of absence in term time and a Fixed Penalty Fine will be issued.
- For Safeguarding purposes, any absence should be notified to the school daily before 8.30am.

Attendance at Boston High School is constantly monitored to make sure that students achieve their best possible results during their time with us. Poor attendance not only affects a student's grades but also their social interaction with their peers. As such, good attendance is rewarded routinely throughout the academic year.

Students should not be late to school without a valid reason, such as medical appointments. School gates now close at 8.40am encouraging students to be in school and ready to learn from 8.45am at the latest. A student late to school will be given a 30 minute detention at lunch time on the same day (under school policy this does not require prior notice to parents). Parents and carers will receive a text message in the morning notifying them that their child was late to school.

The school will apply for Fixed Penalty Notices for persistent poor attendance (below 90%) or holidays taken during term time. A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.
- Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an

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The Registered Office address is as detailed above.

exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the Local Authority before a magistrates' court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Important Update – Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

The Government, Schools and the Local Authorities Attendance Teams are working together to improve attendance. Parents and Carers must also work together with schools to promote high attendance.

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19th August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19th August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at a reduced rate of £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19th August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Legislation: If a student fails to return to school 10 days following the expected date of return after a leave of absence, the school is entitled to remove that child from the school roll.

The School's Attendance Policy is available via the website. The Lincolnshire County Council 'Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct' can be viewed on their website: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>

If you have any concerns regarding this, please contact our Family Support Officer, Mrs Lafferty via our Main Office.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Franks
Associate Headteacher

