

Cheddar First School

Where Every Child is at the Heart



Dear Parent and Carers

Focus on Supporting Good School Attendance

As we begin another school year, we continue to focus on attendance and how we can ensure all our pupils are in school as often as possible. Regular attendance is crucial for your child's academic success and overall well-being.

At Cheddar First School, we have high aspirations for all our pupils and expect them to be in school every day they can be.

Why Attendance Matters

Learning Continuity: Regular attendance ensures that your child is included in important lessons, activities and opportunities.

Social Development: Being in school helps your child build strong relationships with peers and teachers.

Future Success: Consistent attendance sets a positive pattern for future education and employment.

Our Attendance Expectations

- All pupils should be in school on time every day the school is open
- Notify us as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend school
- Ensure medical and dental appointments are arranged outside school hours wherever possible
- Work with us if your child is experiencing barriers to attendance so we can put the right support in place
- Holidays are not taken during term-time

Unauthorised Term-Time Leave

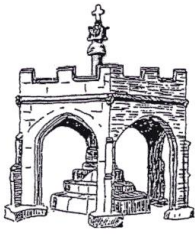
Children have a protected right to full-time education. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly.

In line with statutory guidance, Cheddar First School will not authorise any requests for term-time leave unless the circumstances are both exceptional and unavoidable. Any unauthorised leave that meets the national threshold is likely to result in parents being issued with a penalty notice.



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A Support First Approach

If your child is experiencing barriers to regular attendance, we will work with you so the right support can be offered and those barriers overcome. Where needed, we will also work with other services and the Local Authority to ensure the right support is available.

How You Can Help

Set a Routine: Establish a consistent morning routine to help your child get to school on time.

Stay Informed: Keep track of term dates to ensure your child is in school when they need to be. You can keep yourself up to date by visiting: www.cheddarfirstschool.co.uk/term-dates

Communicate: Let us know if your child is facing any challenges that may affect their attendance by calling the school office on 01934 742546.

Collaborate: Work with us and engage with support to help your child attend regularly.

We are committed to supporting you and your child. Together, we can create an inclusive, positive and productive learning environment for all children.

Attendance and the Law

Where there are barriers to attendance, we will always aim to resolve them through support and collaboration before considering legal intervention.

Where necessary, however, Cheddar First School will take action to protect a pupil's right to their education. This may include the issue of a penalty notice or legal action being taken.

If you are worried about your child's attendance or feel there is something we need to be aware of, please contact us on 01934 742546.

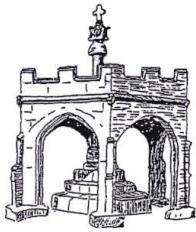
Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs Smith
Headteacher
Cheddar First School



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Supporting Good School Attendance

Information about Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School



Following the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences recorded after 19 August 2024.

This information refers to penalty notices that are considered for both irregular attendance and unauthorised term-time leave.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice is a fixed penalty fine issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution in relation to unauthorised school absence.

Who can be a Penalty be Issued to?

Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent or carer of each child whose unauthorised absence meets the national threshold.

For example, in a family with two parents and three children taking unauthorised term-time leave, each parent could receive a penalty notice for each child resulting in six penalty notices being issued.

The National Threshold

Schools are required to consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a child reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

Absences do not have to be consecutive and can be a combination of any unauthorised absence codes (G, O, N or U).

The rolling ten school week period can span terms, school years and schools.

The First Offence

The first time a parent is issued with a penalty notice in relation to a child's absence, they will be able to pay the reduced amount of £80 if they pay within 21 days.

After 21 days, the full amount of £160 is payable within 28 days.

The Second Offence

If a parent is issued with a second penalty notice within three years the amount payable will be £160 within 28 days.

The reduced amount will not be available.

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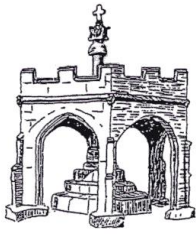
Email: office@cheddarfirstschool.co.uk



Wessex Learning Trust
We Learn Together!



"Working Together for Your Children"



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Further Offences

A parent cannot be issued with more than two penalty notices in relation to each child within a three-year period. Where this threshold is met and further offences occur, the Local Authority will consider other measures to address attendance concerns.

This may include prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and the parent having a criminal record. In rare cases, parents may receive a custodial sentence. **If convicted, the offence will also show on any future DBS checks.**

Appealing a Penalty Notice

There is no statutory right for parents to appeal penalty notices for unauthorised school absence.

If a parent believes a penalty notice has been issued in error, they should contact their child's school as quickly as possible. If an error has been made, the school may request a withdrawal.

Not Paying a Penalty Notice

If a penalty notice is not paid within the payment period, Somerset Council may prosecute the parent for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

The Law

Penalty notices are issued in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 when a parent has failed to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Penalty notices can only be issued when:

- ✓ a child's absence meets the national threshold
- ✓ issuing a penalty notice is compliant with the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct

Every local authority has a Penalty Notice Code of Conduct that outlines how, and when, it will issue penalty notices relating to unauthorised school absence.

Somerset's Code of Conduct is available online and describes the circumstances when issuing a penalty notice is appropriate.

Penalty notices will only be issued in line with the Code of Conduct.

Useful Links

- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [Somerset Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)



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