



A SPECIALIST SCIENCE SCHOOL

Headteacher  
Andrew Fletcher, BA

# Sandhurst School

the opportunity to succeed

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January 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

## RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS – FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

I am writing to inform you that Bracknell Forest Council will be implementing the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences from school to take immediate effect.

There is much research which demonstrates the links between regular attendance at school and academic achievement – the more a pupil attends the more they can achieve. If your child has two weeks off or odd days absence from school over a sustained period of time those days cannot be recovered, the learning is missed and your child will be in danger of falling behind.

From now on, Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, will consider the issue of a Penalty Notice if requested by a Headteacher. The following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months
- Other than in specific circumstances<sup>1</sup>, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year<sup>2</sup>.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- Issue a Penalty Notice without warning<sup>3</sup>

Currently the tariff for the Fixed Penalty Notice is £50 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £100 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt. If the Penalty Notice is not paid at the end of the 42 day period then Bracknell Forest Council may proceed to prosecution for the offence.

Parents/carers should not expect the school to agree to a family holiday during term time. Parents/carers **do not** have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday at times when they should be attending school. Schools will normally refuse to authorise holidays during term time and the Local Authority will support them in doing so. Only in exceptional circumstances will the school authorise absence for a family holiday (e.g. one parent cannot take holiday during school holiday)

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Fletcher  
Headteacher

Would you prefer to receive your letters by Email? If so, please notify the school and provide us with your Email address



<sup>1</sup>The deliberate taking of holiday in term time without/against school permission where it can clearly be demonstrated that the parent understood that permission would not have been granted and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions in the current term.

<sup>2</sup>In circumstances where the criteria for issuing a Penalty Notice are met more frequently a prosecution will be appropriate.

<sup>3</sup>Exceptional circumstances will include:

- if there have been previous attendance concerns
- if the pupil is already on open referral to Education Welfare and has time off for unauthorised term-time holiday
- if there is a second unauthorised holiday absence within a 6 month period
- any holiday absence within the first three weeks of the academic year
- any holiday absence by a pupil who should be sitting public exams during the public examination period.

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