



Davenant Foundation School

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

Last Reviewed: November 2024

Next Review: November 2027

This policy has been reviewed and to the best of our knowledge we do not feel that it impacts on any group or individuals' equality rights within our school community

POLICY DETAILS

Policy Name	Attendance and Absence	Committee Responsible	Curriculum
Status	DISCRETIONARY	Committee Person i/c	SME
Produced by	EH	First Agreed	
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Statement of intent

Davenant Foundation School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance officer is Susan Liao-Tetherton, and can be contacted via attendance@davenant.org. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

1. Legal framework

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), March 2024 and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance champion.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance officer and SLT champion are responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.

- Informing the LA of any pupil's name being deleted from the admission register unless exceptions apply.
- The SLT Champion is Ms S Mcvittie, Deputy Headteacher.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.
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4. Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and will ensure that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Attend school every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend every timetabled lesson.

The school day will start at **8:30am**, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, pupils will be expected to be on the school site by **8:30am**. Pupils will have a morning break at **11:00am**, which will last until **11:20am**, and a lunch break at **12:20pm**, which will last until **1:20pm** – pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at **9:30am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time
- The afternoon register will be marked by **1:30pm**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time
- The afternoon register will close at **1:45pm**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

5. Absence procedures

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone or email to

attendance@davenant.org before **9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via **a text message** as soon as is practicable on the first day that the pupil does not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer or key stage manager. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **90 percent**, the attendance officer will arrange a formal meeting with the pupil and their parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

6. Attendance register

The school uses Talaxy and SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and **at the start of the afternoon session**. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

See **Appendix 1** for the DfE attendance codes

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

7. Authorising parental absence requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid and unpaid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

The school will usually grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the leave is to enable the pupil to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution, e.g. university or college.

Study leave for a public examination

The school may grant leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with.

Pupils subject to a part-time timetable

In very exceptional circumstances and where it is in a pupil's best interests, the school will grant leave of absence to accommodate for a pupil on a part-time timetable. In such circumstances, the days on which the pupil is expected to attend school will be agreed in advance.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body.

8. SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

9. Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT and Student Services team, will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents.
 - Having a **weekly** tutor review.
 - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
 - Using fixed penalty notices.
 - Attendance meetings.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the '[Monitoring and analysing absence](#)' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

Please see **appendix 2** for further details of the attendance intervention process

10. Working with parents to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

11. Persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of PA, in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

12. Penalty notices and legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' guidance.

For further information on fines please see **Appendix 3**.

13. Monitoring and analysing absence

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data **weekly** to ensure that intervention and support is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The attendance officer will conduct thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

14. Deletions of names from the admission register

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there

- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

15. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is November 2027.

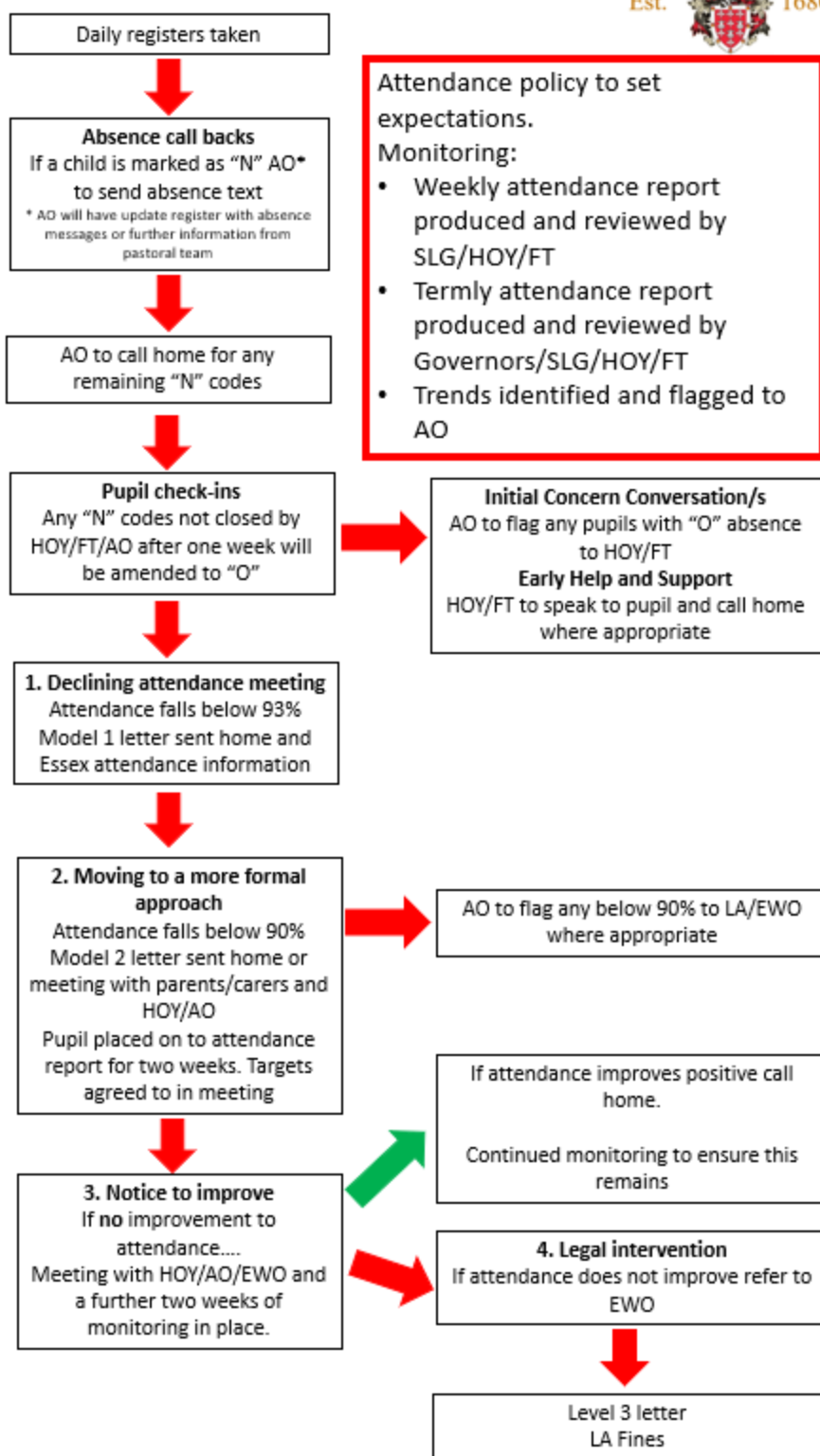
Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1 - Attendance codes	
Code	Description
Code /I:	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
Code L	Late arrival before the register is closed
Code K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
Code V	Attending an educational visit or trip
Code P	Participating in a sporting activity
Code W	Attending work experience
Code B	Attending any other approved educational activity
Code C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
Code M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
Code J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
Code S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
Code X:	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Code C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Code D	Dual registered at another school
Code C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Code T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
Code R	Religious observance
Code I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
Code Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Code Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Code Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Code Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Code Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Code Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Code Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Code G	Holiday not granted by the school
Code N	Reason for absence not yet established
Code 0	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
Code U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Code Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
Code#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2

Attendance intervention process





Helping parents understand the national threshold/framework for penalty notice fines/prosecution for school attendance

From 19 August 2024, there is a National Threshold for legal action and a National Framework for Penalty Notice Fines which relate to unauthorised absences recorded by schools

National Threshold
<p>There is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice/prosecution under section 444 1/1A Education Act 1996 must be considered by ALL schools in England - this is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period• These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, including lateness (arriving after the register has closed)• <u>For example</u>, a single 5-day unauthorised holiday during term time would meet the national threshold• <u>Equally</u>, 5 separate days or 10 separate sessions of absence recorded over a rolling ten school week period would meet this national threshold• The 10-school week period can span different terms and school years• In addition, where a pupil moves from one school to another and a total of 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded by both schools over a rolling ten school week period, the national threshold will have been met
Who may be fined/prosecuted?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent without authorisation from school. In exceptional circumstances, parents may not receive a penalty notice and may, instead, face prosecution as a result of their child's absence from school• <u>For example</u>, 3 siblings absent for unauthorised leave during term-time would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines or each parent facing three separate offence charges in court
First Offence – where a penalty notice is issued
<p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the fine amount will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days• If not paid within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 per parent, per child, payable between the 22nd and 28th day
Second Offence (within 3 years) – where a second penalty notice is issued
<p>The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, a reduced rate is not available. The amount therefore will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £160 per parent, per child – payable within 28 days
Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)
<p>The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice WILL NOT be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500• Cases found guilty in a Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate (Disclosure and Barring Service) due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'