



**Heather Garth**  
**Primary Academy**  
Stars Aiming High

# Attendance Policy

## Policy Review Details

This review date is a guideline only and if circumstances or recommendations change then the policy will be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

**This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors on an annual basis**

**Date of Issue: SPRING 2024**

S. Farr

**Chair of Governors Signature**

**Headteacher Signature**

**Date of next review: SPRING 2025**

**BMBC revised Sept 23**



## **Regular Attendance**

Section 7 Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to secure the education of their child(ren) of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.1 Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. (Code of Conduct on the issue of penalty notices for schools and academies, BMBC 2023)

Therefore, at Heather Garth we are keen to support our families in achieving good attendance **because every day counts** in a child's school life.

We are striving towards every child obtaining 96% attendance and aim to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure that each child is given the opportunity to access education that enables them to reach his / her full potential.

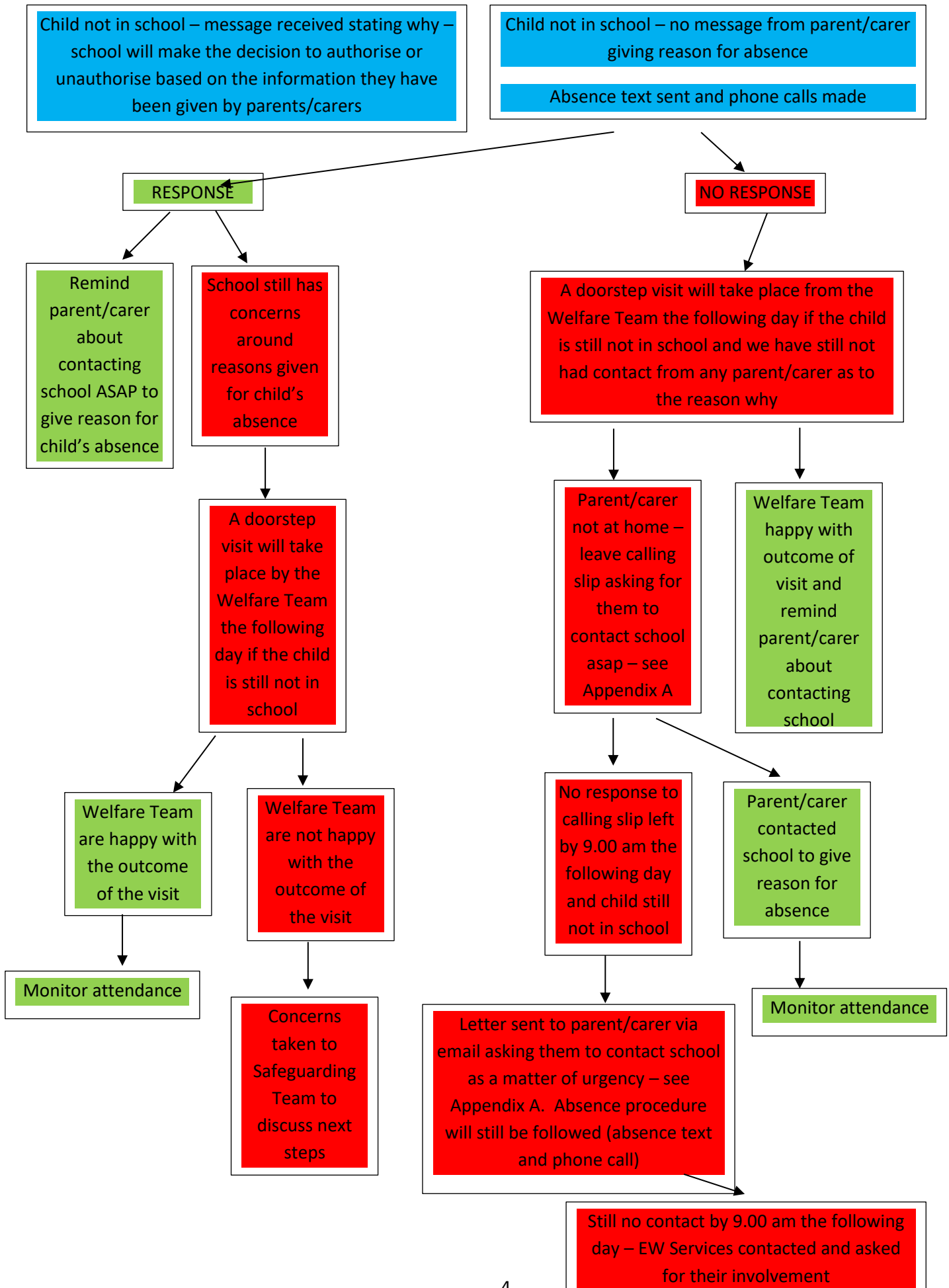
### **In order to manage and promote regular school attendance we will:**

- Encourage regular attendance, provide a welcoming atmosphere and be sympathetic to individual concerns.
- Keep parents updated on attendance and the school calendar, via letters home, newsletters and the school website.
- Report to parents how their child is achieving in school and how their child's attendance is impacting on this via regular parents' consultation meetings.
- Make sure that regular and accurate records are kept and maintained for all pupils.
- Monitor individual student's attendance in line with the attendance policy.
- Attendance figures will be reported on a termly basis to the school governors.
- Celebrate and acknowledge good and improved attendance by: -
  - rewarding year groups with a termly trophy full of goodies and a certificate
  - rewarding the class with the best weekly attendance and punctuality with a £5.00 voucher
  - Individual certificate and pencil or similar for each child to acknowledge and celebrate achieving outstanding and excellent attendance every term
  - Individual certificate and special trophy for each child to acknowledge and celebrate achieving outstanding and excellent attendance for the whole academic school year

## **ABSENCES**

- We ask Parents/Carers to contact school on the first day of their child's absence before 9.30 am, wherever possible.
- To maintain high standards, we operate a first day absence call / text message if school has not been informed of the reason why a child is absent.
- The school will make the decision to authorise or unauthorise the absence. School will make this decision based on the information they have so parents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible e.g. medical appointment cards, symptoms of any illnesses.

## FIRST DAY ABSENCE RESPONSE:-



## **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

The school requests that parents consider the time their child will be out of school by making any non-urgent, routine check-ups out of school time / in school holidays or as near to the beginning or end of the school day. The school office should be made aware of all appointments in advance and parents / carers should bring in appropriate appointment cards/letters in order that these can be noted on the attendance database (SIMS) system.

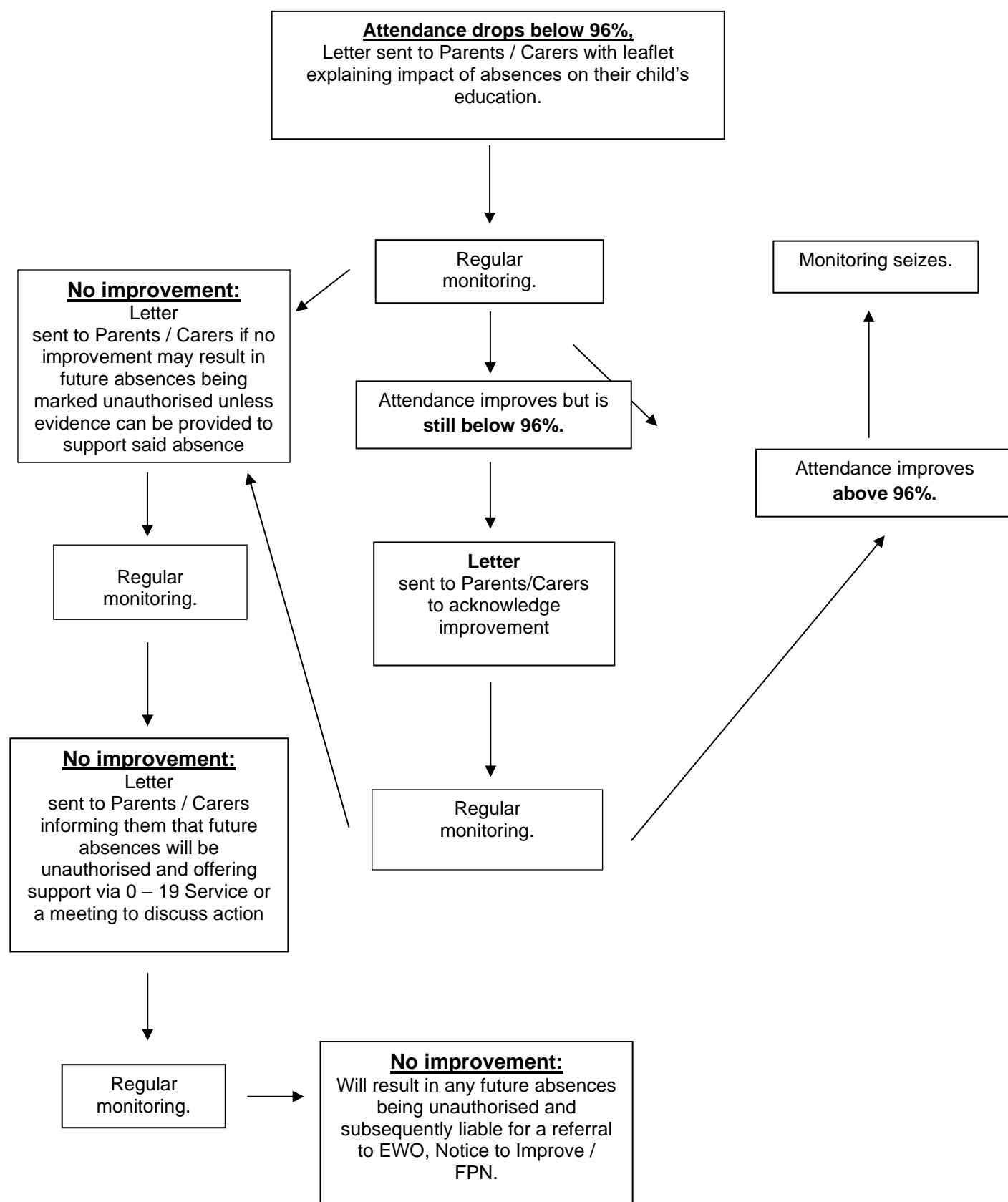
## **INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN SCHOOL AND NURSERIES**

We follow the Guidelines issued by Public Health England – Health Protection in Schools and other childcare facilities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities> with regards to infectious diseases in Schools and Nurseries. Please ensure you take advice from school to avoid the spread of infectious diseases.

## **POOR ATTENDANCE**

- The school attendance target is 96%. When a child's attendance falls below 96%, the Parent/Carer will be contacted by letter to alert them that their child's attendance has fallen below this percentage and their attendance will be monitored. Parents will also receive an attendance leaflet explaining the impact absences have on a child's access to education.
- Parents will receive a second letter informing them as to whether there has been some improvement or not, and what their child's attendance is. The second letter does state, whether there has been improvement or not, that if attendance does not improve, any future absences may be marked unauthorised unless they are able to provide evidence to support the absence. Support will be offered by school by way of a referral to the 0 – 19 Service or a meeting to support with any issues they may be encountering getting their child to school. Unauthorised absence may be subject to a notice to improve and subsequently a fixed penalty notice.
- If attendance does not improve or continue to improve, a further letter will be sent informing them of the above action and offering the said support. This meeting is so that support can be offered and a plan made to improve attendance. The Education Welfare Officer will outline further action which may be taken if attendance does not improve.
- The Local Authority states that when a child's attendance falls below 90%, they are classed as a Persistent Absentee.

The chart below shows the process followed in school when attendance falls below 96% and becomes a concern.



## **LATES**

Arriving late to school has an impact, both on a child's education and the rest of the class through the disruption of a child's late entry into the classroom. Registers are taken at 8.45 am.

- Any child arriving between 8.45 am – 9.15 am will be registered as 'L' - late after registration.
- Any child arriving after 9.15 am will be registered as 'U' – late after registration has closed. This is classed as an unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may be subject to a notice to improve / penalty notice.

We monitor children arriving late and will contact parents by email if any lates are registered for their child. Persistent lateness will be reported and addressed by the Education Welfare Officer.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. **Any request for leave of absence must be made in advance.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

The request for leave of absence **should** be made by the parent /carer "with whom the child normally resides". If this is the parent /carer who is not taking the child out of school, the full name and address of the parent /carer who is taking the child out of school/academy **must** be provided on the form.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

The Academy will not authorise any holidays during term time.

**If any holidays are taken a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.**

## **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

If a child has 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absences in any one term parents/carers may be **liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.**

If a child has 10 or more instances in a term of arriving late after registers have closed, parents/carers **may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice for failing to ensure that their child is punctual and has the best chance of learning successfully during their morning session.**

## **LEGAL SCANTIONS**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If you go ahead with the leave of absence when unauthorised, you may receive a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority. See Appendix A for changes to penalty notices for school absence.

**Please note: Multiple Penalty Notices can be issued in an academic term and where there is more than one person liable for the absence, a separate warning/fixed penalty may be issued.**

Failure to pay a fixed Penalty Notice will render you liable to criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

For more information on issuing penalty notices please refer to the Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-absence/>

### **WORKING WITH OTHERS**

If a child has a social worker or registered as LAC the social worker / virtual head will be informed of the child's absence and the best way of maintaining contact and offering support will be agreed between agencies.

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Staff and Governors at Heather Garth Primary Academy believe strongly that good attendance and punctuality are imperative for children to receive the best out of their education. We will do all that we can to encourage and support children, parents and carers to conform to our high expectations.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school office for further advice and assistance if required.



## Changes to Penalty Notices for School Absence

The new National Framework comes into effect on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### **Penalty Notices** can be issued for:

**Leave of Absence** - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. The LA retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met.

**Unauthorised Absence** - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent to the parent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school prior to the notice being issued.

**First Offence** – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

**Second Offence (within three years)** – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

**Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)** – The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent per child.

Further information on the changes can be found in our [5 Minute Guide](#)