



12<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Dear All,

## **Subject: Important Update on School Attendance Procedures from January**

I am writing to inform you of important updates to our school attendance processes, which will take effect from **January 2026**. These changes ensure that our procedures are fully **in line with Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance** and the Southern Education Trust policy on attendance.

### **Why Attendance Matters**

The DfE guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)* makes clear that every moment in school counts. Evidence shows that pupils with good attendance achieve better academic outcomes, enjoy improved wellbeing, and are more likely to thrive in later life.

Schools are required to promote high attendance and take consistent action where pupils miss school without a valid reason. At Broadstone Middle School to date we have:

**15% of pupils persistently absent (below 90% attendance)**

**21% of pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (90 – 95% attendance)**

We therefore need to ensure we follow the DFE processes accurately to see an immediate improvement in attendance.

### **DfE Guidance on Term-Time Holidays**

From **August 2024**, the DfE introduced a **national framework for penalty notices**. This means:

- A **fixed penalty notice must be considered** when a child has **10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days – 2 registration marks per day)** of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period.
- A **term-time holiday** is classed as unauthorised absence unless there are **exceptional circumstances** approved by the headteacher.
- The penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. (Please be aware that any fines issued for taking a child out of school during term time for a holiday are payable directly to the local authority, not the school.)

In practice, this means that **any holiday taken during term time will automatically trigger a fixed penalty notice**.

The DfE also sets out clear expectations for **fast-track procedures** and **legal action** where attendance does not improve:

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- **Fast-Track to Attendance:** Local authorities may use a formalised process where parents are given a short period (**usually 10 weeks**) to improve their child's attendance. This includes formal meetings, attendance contracts, and clear targets.
- **Prosecution:** If parents fail to ensure regular attendance, schools and local authorities can initiate legal proceedings under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**. This may result in fines of up to **£2,500**, community orders, or even custodial sentences in the most serious cases.

These measures are intended as a last resort, after support and penalty notices have failed to secure improvement.

### **Southern Education Trust Policy**

As part of the Southern Education Trust, our school is committed to applying this guidance consistently. From January, we will:

- **Refuse requests for term-time holidays** unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- **Issue fixed penalty notices** in line with the national threshold.
- Continue to work closely with families to support good attendance and address any barriers.

### **Supporting Families**

We understand that family circumstances can sometimes be challenging. Our priority is to work with you to ensure your child attends school regularly and benefits fully from their education. If you are experiencing difficulties that may affect attendance, please contact us so we can provide support.

**In summary:** From January 2026, our attendance processes will follow DfE statutory guidance and Southern Education Trust policy. Any holiday taken in term time will result in a fixed penalty notice.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that our pupils receive the best possible education.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Palmer

Acting Headteacher

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