

Our reference: EWS/HT  
Date: January 2019



City of  
**Stoke-on-Trent**

**Children & Family  
Services**

Civic Centre  
Glebe Street  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 1HH

Louise Rees  
**Director**

Dear Parent / Guardian,

### **Changes to Penalty Notices for Absence from School**

The City Council has, as one of its top priorities, the raising of pupils' levels of attainment in all of our schools and it is clear that improving attendance and reducing levels of persistent absence are the most important factors in achieving this goal. This cannot be achieved without your co-operation and whilst we would like to thank you for the work you have already done we must ask for further support in this crucial area.

As a result, we have reviewed the Code of Conduct and have made a few changes to previous guidance to schools, parents and carers regarding absence from school. The new guidance will come into force from 1 January 2019 and is detailed below:

#### **Penalty Notice for Leave of Absence in term time**

From 1 January 2019 any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your Head Teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any leave taken which is recorded as unauthorised absence by the school may be referred by your Head Teacher into the Local Authority and the following actions may be applied:

- A Penalty Notice payable of **a £60 or £120 fine**.
- Prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to **£1,000**.

#### **Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness**

If your child has had 6 days unauthorised absence or is late 12 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local Head Teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website [www.stoke.gov.uk/education](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/education).

Please tell us if you need this letter in an alternative format

**contacting the council:**

**Telephone:** 01782 23 4234    **Text:** 07786 200 700

**Email:** [Enquiries@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@stoke.gov.uk)

**stoke.gov.uk**

The vast majority of children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent have an excellent record of school attendance, and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when we are notified by Head Teachers, both to support them in their role and to ensure local children can continue to achieve the best possible outcomes from attending local schools.

**Your child's education is important; together we can ensure that they achieve their full potential.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jen Lomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jen Lomas  
Assistant Director – Learning Services  
[Jen.Lomas@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Jen.Lomas@stoke.gov.uk)

On behalf of Head teachers  
and Governing Bodies