EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

How can we help?

- Every school has an allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is able to give advice, support and guidance on attendance related matters**.**
- If your child is in a Haringey Secondary School, the EWO is based at the school, whilst the EWO for any special or primary school is based at the address on this leaflet.
- Working together with the pupil, parent and school staff the EWO will make an assessment of the situation.
- A contract will be drawn up which will include details of support and agreed actions with timescales for improvement.
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved will be clearly defined.
- Referrals to other support agencies will take place as appropriate.
- Any legal action and its consequences will be explained in detail to a parent before any action is taken.

If you would like further advice about Fixed Penalty notices or any issues relating to school attendance please contact:

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE
London Borough of Haringey
Education Services
48 Station Road, Wood Green
London, N22 7TY

Tel: 020 8489 3866
Email: ews@haringey.gov.uk

The Education Welfare Service is committed to helping your child achieve their potential

HARINGEY EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Advice for all parents and carers of children attending Haringey schools

Haringey LONDON

WHAT IS THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003?

Section 23 of the Act gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.
The powers came into force on the 27th February 2004.

WHY HAS IT BEEN INTRODUCED?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.
Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

WHAT IS A PENALTY NOTICE?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in Court whilst still securing an improvement in a pupil's attendance. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

Payment within 21 days of receipt of a Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days.

Please note that each parent will separately be issued a Penalty Notice for each child.

WHEN ARE THEY USED?

Haringey considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs.

Excessive holidays in term time, delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission, parentally condoned absence, lateness after the registers have closed, and overt truancy could lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

In every case a pupil will have had a minimum of 6 school sessions (3 school days) lost to unauthorised absence in a six-week period before a Penalty Notice is considered.

The Authority never takes such action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to any enforcement actions.

Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that the Authority will use the powers if this is the only way of securing a child' schooling.

IS A WARNING GIVEN?

Yes, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absence and give you 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warnings of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning you can make representation should you wish.

HOW ARE THEY ISSUED?

By post to your home.

HOW DO I PAY?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT PAY?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrate's Court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.
If proven, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences or custody, depending upon circumstances.

CAN I BE PROSECUTED IF I PAY THE PENALTY NOTICE BUT MY CHILD IS STILL MISSING SCHOOL?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice - payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.

CAN I GET HELP IF MY CHILD IS NOT ATTENDING REGULARLY?

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance.
It is very important that you speak with the school or with the Education Welfare Service at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about your child's school attendance.