



Belton Lane

Primary School

Belton Lane Community Primary School, Green Lane, Grantham, NG31 9PP

15th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

School Attendance and Term-Time Leave

Regular attendance at school is essential to children's education, wellbeing and progress. We would therefore like to remind all parents and carers about the rules relating to absence from school, particularly requests for holidays and other leave during term time.

All schools must follow the Department for Education's statutory guidance on school attendance. Your existing letter correctly reflects the principle that leave during term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Requesting Leave of Absence

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. A leave of absence may only be granted where the school considers that exceptional circumstances apply. A holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation would not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance.

Any request for leave must:

- be made **in advance** by a parent with whom the child normally lives;
- explain clearly the exceptional circumstances surrounding the request; and
- be considered individually by the Headteacher, taking into account the particular circumstances and relevant background to the request.

Where leave is granted, the school will decide how many days of absence will be authorised. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is taken out of school without permission having been granted in advance, the absence will normally be recorded as **unauthorised**.

In line with our school procedures, we ask parents to submit requests **at least four weeks in advance wherever possible**.

Unauthorised Absence and Penalty Notices

Where an absence is not authorised and the national threshold is met, the school and Local Authority will consider whether a **Penalty Notice** or another appropriate intervention is required.

The national threshold is:

10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Ten sessions will usually be equivalent to **5 school days**.

The sessions:

- do not have to be consecutive;
- can be made up of different types of unauthorised absence; and
- can span different terms or school years.

Headteacher: Mr J Mason Tel 01476 247724
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For example, **5 days of unauthorised term-time leave would normally amount to 10 sessions and therefore meet the national threshold.**

Reaching the threshold means that a Penalty Notice **must be considered**; it does not mean that a fine is automatically issued in every circumstance. The circumstances of the individual case and the appropriate support or intervention must be considered.

Who Can Receive a Penalty Notice?

Penalty Notices may be issued to **each parent for each child**. For example, if two parents take two children out of school for an unauthorised absence which results in Penalty Notices being issued, **each parent could receive a separate Penalty Notice for each child.**

For attendance purposes, the definition of a parent can include natural parents, those with parental responsibility and those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child.

Penalty Notice Charges

The national arrangements are as follows:

First Penalty Notice

The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent for a particular child within a rolling three-year period is:

- **£80 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days.

If it is not paid within 21 days, the amount increases to:

- **£160 per parent, per child**, payable within 28 days.

Second Penalty Notice within three years

If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within the rolling three-year period, the charge is:

- **£160 per parent, per child**, payable within 28 days.

There is no reduced £80 rate for a second Penalty Notice.

Further Offences

A maximum of two Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period.

If the national threshold is met again within that period, a further Penalty Notice cannot be issued. The Local Authority will instead consider another appropriate legal intervention, which may include **prosecution**.

Where a parent is prosecuted for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, the consequences can be significantly more serious. Depending on the offence and circumstances, prosecution can result in a fine of up to **£2,500**, a community order or a custodial sentence of up to three months.

Working Together to Improve Attendance

Penalty Notices and legal action form only one part of the national approach to improving school attendance.

Our priority is always to work with children and families to understand and overcome barriers to regular attendance. The DfE guidance emphasises working collaboratively with families, providing support and using formal or legal interventions where appropriate.

If your child is experiencing difficulties that are affecting their attendance, please speak to us as soon as possible. We will work with you to identify appropriate support.

Taking children out of school unnecessarily can affect their learning, progress and continuity of education. We therefore ask parents and carers to avoid arranging holidays or other leisure activities during term time.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and for supporting your child's regular attendance at school.

If you have any questions about attendance, or require support with your child's attendance, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Mason
Headteacher

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