



14th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important Update: Attendance, Punctuality and Penalty Notices

At **Pakefield High School**, we are committed to ensuring that every student attends school regularly and on time so that they can achieve their full potential. Excellent attendance is closely linked to academic success, positive wellbeing, stronger relationships, and better future opportunities.

The **Department for Education (DfE)** continues to place a strong emphasis on improving school attendance and, as a result, schools and local authorities are expected to challenge avoidable absence and take action where attendance concerns are not addressed.

We are writing to remind all families of their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and to explain when penalty notices and legal action may be considered.

Why Attendance Matters

Every day in school counts. Missing lessons can have a significant impact on a student's progress, confidence, relationships and achievement.

Students who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- Make good academic progress.
- Achieve better examination outcomes.
- Develop positive friendships.
- Feel connected to school life.
- Be better prepared for further education, training and employment.

Our expectation is that all students attend school every day unless there is an unavoidable reason preventing them from doing so. If your child is unable to attend you are expected to notify the school by 08.30.



National Attendance Framework

Under the national framework for school attendance, a penalty notice may be considered when a student accumulates **10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period**. These sessions do not need to be consecutive.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority and apply **per parent, per child**.

Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

Family holidays and other leisure activities should be arranged during school holiday periods.

Headteachers may only authorise leave of absence during term time in **exceptional circumstances**. Requests for family holidays, cheaper travel arrangements, birthdays, family celebrations, visiting relatives abroad, or similar activities are unlikely to be authorised.

Where leave is taken without authorisation, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of a penalty notice.

Illness Absence

We understand that children will occasionally be absent due to genuine illness and we ask parents and carers to continue reporting absences in line with school procedures.

However, schools are expected to monitor attendance patterns carefully and challenge absences where concerns exist. Where illness absence becomes frequent, prolonged, follows a pattern, or results in significantly reduced attendance, the school may request additional information or medical evidence to support the absence.

Examples of attendance concerns that may be challenged include:

- Frequent absences due to minor ailments.
- Regular reports of illness without medical advice being sought.
- Repeated absences on particular days of the week.
- Absences immediately before or after weekends, holidays or school events.
- Persistent illness absence that causes attendance to fall significantly below expected levels.



- Repeated illness absence where supporting evidence has been requested but not provided

Where the school is unable to authorise an absence because there is insufficient evidence or because the circumstances do not meet the criteria for authorised absence, the sessions may be recorded as **unauthorised absence**. These unauthorised sessions can contribute towards the national threshold for penalty notices.

Our aim will always be to work with families and provide support where needed. However, attendance concerns that remain unresolved may result in further action being considered.

Punctuality and Late Arrival

Good attendance also means arriving at school **on time every day**.

Students who arrive late miss important learning, disrupt lessons and often find it harder to settle into the school day.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that students arrive at school before registration closes. Where a student arrives after the register has closed, the session may be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. Repeated incidents of lateness after the register has closed can therefore contribute towards the threshold for penalty notices.

The school will monitor and challenge:

- Persistent lateness to school.
- Regular lateness on specific days.
- Patterns of lateness that impact learning.
- Failure to improve punctuality despite support and intervention.

We will always seek to understand and address any barriers to punctuality, but continued unauthorised lateness may result in referral to the Local Authority in line with national attendance regulations.

Penalty Notice Fines

The current national penalty notice framework provides for the following:

First Penalty Notice

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



- Rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Second Penalty Notice

- £160 per parent, per child.
- Applies where a further offence occurs within three years.

Third Offence

A third penalty notice cannot be issued for the same child within a three-year period. Instead, the Local Authority may consider prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

Court action can result in:

- Fines of up to £2,500.
- Parenting Orders.
- Community Orders.
- In the most serious cases, imprisonment.

Working Together

Our priority is always to work in partnership with families to secure the best outcomes for every child. Where attendance concerns arise, we will seek to provide support, guidance and intervention to help improve attendance before matters escalate.

Below is an graphic of our attendance model to illustrate the schools approach to support all students with good attendance:



PAKEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

EVERY DAY COUNTS

BE HERE • BE READY • BELONG • ACHIEVE

ATTENDANCE = SUCCESS

Good attendance helps you:

- Learn more
- Achieve better results
- Build stronger friendships
- Grow in confidence
- Reach your potential
- Create more opportunities for the future

THE IMPACT OF ABSENCE

Missing just **1 day** every fortnight means:

- Around 10% of learning missed
- Less curriculum knowledge
- More gaps in learning
- Less confidence in lessons
- Greater pressure during assessments
- Reduced achievement over time

THE PAKEFIELD ATTENDANCE MODEL

NOTICE
We spot concerns early

UNDERSTAND
We identify the barrier

SUPPORT
We remove obstacles to success

CHALLENGE
We maintain high expectations

ESCALATE
We act when attendance doesn't improve

WHY ATTENDANCE MATTERS

😊	100% OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE
😊	97-100% EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE On track to achieve your very best
😊	95-96.9% GOOD ATTENDANCE Keep building strong habits
😐	90-94.9% ATTENDANCE CONCERN Missing valuable learning time
😞	BELOW 90% PERSISTENT ABSENCE At risk of falling behind

REMEMBER
90% IS NOT GOOD ATTENDANCE
IT IS A WARNING SIGN

OUR ATTENDANCE MOTTO

- UNDERSTAND THE BARRIER
- MAINTAIN THE EXPECTATION
- REMOVE THE BARRIER
- GET THE PUPIL BACK

THE PAKEFIELD PROMISE

We will:

- ✓ EXPECT
- ✓ NOTICE
- ✓ UNDERSTAND
- ✓ SUPPORT
- ✓ CHALLENGE
- ✓ ESCALATE
- ✓ CELEBRATE

THE PAKEFIELD 10

- WORK HARD**
Give your best every day
- SHOW RESPECT**
Value everyone and everything
- TAKE PART**
Get involved in school life

EVERY LESSON COUNTS

EVERY DAY COUNTS

EVERY ADULT • EVERY PUPIL • EVERY DAY

Attendance is everyone's business



We ask all parents and carers to support us by ensuring that students:

- Attend school every day unless genuinely unwell.
- Arrive on time each morning.
- Avoid unnecessary absence.
- Take holidays during school holiday periods.
- Communicate with the school promptly if support is required.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that every student benefits from the education they deserve.

Yours faithfully,

Mr E. Gibbons
Deputy Headteacher