

EDUCATION FIXED PENALTY NOTICES. ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL.

The law empowers designated Cheshire West and Cheshire Officers, Headteachers – including their nominated Deputies – and the Police to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents of children who have unauthorised absence from school, with fines up to £60 per child per parent. (For example, family with 2 children, with 2 parents pay £240 from autumn 2018.) Fines rise if not paid on time. For example, in 2019, a parent at this school was fined a total of £800 for non-payment & costs by the courts. Regular & punctual attendance in school is a legal requirement. Non-payment will result in prosecution.

The background to this is that Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for parents to fail to secure their child's attendance at the school where they're registered, if that absence isn't authorised by the school.

If unauthorised absence occurs (such as taking holidays in term time or keeping a child off school without authorisation from the Headteacher), a fixed penalty notice will be issued to the parents/carers of the child(ren).

St Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School agrees with research that there is a direct correlation between situations where parents take pupils out of school without authorisation and underperformance of pupils.

All requests for authorisation of absences will require parents to make a personal appointment with the school Headteacher, Mr Hughes (or his Deputy, Mrs Thorpe in his absence), in order to ascertain the reason for the request; and to see if it will be approved. Please call in, ring or email the office for an appointment.

There are very few circumstances where Headteachers have the discretion to approve a holiday request. Pupils already have 14 weeks' holidays per year. Two weeks of missing National Curriculum taught sessions, for example, can be very damaging to a child's progress – and also their self-esteem, if they see other pupils having made rapid progress, whilst they were not in school.

Please note that dance competitions do not qualify as an authorised absence.

Where children have had unauthorised absences, causing a gap in learning – for example, missing a week of taught Mathematics – the situation will be assessed by teachers and senior leaders. In such a case, the child will be required to make up for all missed work during free time etc, in order to ensure that there are no gaps to their learning, hindering their attainment & progress.

This strategy has been approved by the full Governing Body.