

The Law

As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly and punctually, even if they are missing without your knowledge. By law, compulsory education for all children in England ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches 16. Katharine Lady Berkeley's School is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority. If your child is not attending regularly and punctually the Education Welfare Officer will contact you. The Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team (Gloucestershire County Council) can take action through the Magistrates Courts against parents or carers whose children are absent from school without good reason. They can issue fines up to £2500 or it may result in imprisonment.

If attendance problems do develop, Katharine Lady Berkeley's School will expect parents to work actively with staff to solve them.

Penalty Notices

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows the issue of fixed penalty notices, an alternative to prosecution that does not require appearance in court.

A notice may be served to each parent that is capable of securing their child's attendance but is failing to do so. Each parent can/will be fined. The notice imposes a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the fine is not paid the parent will be prosecuted for the original offence of failing to secure school attendance. If you would like more information about Penalty Notices, leaflets are available from the school reception.

A Penalty Notice warning letter or fine will be issued when:

- A student is late to school, arriving after 8.45 a.m. 10 or more times in a 10 week period
- A parent takes their child on a leave of absence for 5 days or more without the school's authorisation
- A student who reaches stage 4 of the attendance procedure will be referred to the Education Entitlement and Inclusion team who may issue the parents with a penalty notice.

Authorised absence

- Genuine illness, medical/dental appointments
- A day set aside for religious observance by the religious group to which the student's parents belongs
- Family bereavements
- Authorised leave for exceptional reasons.
- Excluded pupils. Where a pupil is temporarily excluded, their absence will be treated as authorised.

Even when an absence is authorised, we would be concerned if an excessive number of absences started to emerge which, in our opinion, seriously disrupted your child's education

Unauthorised absence

Examples are:

- Removing your child before the end of the day for no agreed reason(s)
- Minding the house or looking after other children
- Shopping trips within school hours
- Family Holiday without authorisation
- Students leaving the school site during school hours without authorisation

If no explanation for an absence is received, it will be treated as unauthorised.