

## August 2024 Update

The school day is split into two sessions – one session counts as a morning or afternoon spent in school. There are only a few occasions where a child is allowed to miss school, such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance.

However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine.

There is also a national framework which will mean all councils have the same rules in place for when they need to consider a fine.

It's important to note that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional barriers and this is taken into consideration. For children who face complex barriers to attendance, we will have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs. Schools, local authorities and wider services are required to work together to provide the right support in the first place.

In most cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine. It's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council. However, under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

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Issue a fixed penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine' – your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court – if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.

Prosecute you – this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to three months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.