Westmorland & Furness Council

30 June 2026

Our Reference: CS/EI/LIS/AE/SW

Dear Parent

As you are aware it is very important that your child attends school every day, on time, if they are able to do so. Regular attendance helps children to get the most out of their school experience, including their achievement, wellbeing and wider life chances. There are only a few circumstances in which a child is able to miss school, such as illness or if permission has been given because of an exceptional circumstance.

If your child misses school without a good reason, the Local Authority can intervene, and you may be issued with a fine. We have previously written to you to explain that the Department for Education has introduced legislation and a national framework for issuing fixed penalty notices meaning that the same rules apply to all schools and Local Authorities when considering whether to issue a fine.

We have received a number of questions and queries relating to the issuing of penalty notices throughout this year and some people are still unsure when a fixed penalty notice might be issued.

The National Framework sets out when an FPN can be issued and includes the following:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10 school week period. Unauthorised absence could include late arrival after the registration period, absence for holiday or other leisure activities and/or other unexplained absence. The absence does not have to be consecutive.
- Unauthorised absence which falls below the threshold of 10 sessions in 10 school weeks but parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

We have also put together the attached FAQ document to offer further clarity regarding the process.

Access to Education, Learning Improvement Service, Education and Inclusion, Children's Services, Westmorland and Furness Council, South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, LA9 4DQ

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Please be aware the number of fines you can receive for each child is capped at two within a three year period from the date of the first fine. If this limit is reached and further unauthorised absence is accumulated, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution, will be considered. Fines are issued separately to each parent for each child. All fines are issued in accordance with our Code of Conduct which can be viewed here: School attendance | Westmorland and Furness Council

Yours sincerely

SARAH WRIGHT

Access to Education Service Manager