



Plymouth Grove Primary School  
Plymouth Grove West  
Chorlton-on-Medlock  
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Headteacher: Mr. M. Cooke  
Deputy Headteacher: Miss J Scott

## RE: Important changes to unauthorised absences and fixed penalty notices (fines)

Dear parents/carers,

At Plymouth Grove Primary School, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall well being of our pupils. We share the Department for Education's (DfE) ambitions to improve school attendance. In this letter, we have highlighted some of the support on offer from Plymouth Grove. However, we also want to describe the important **nationwide changes** that come into force on **19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 in relation to the issuing of fines.**

### Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

### Support First

Plymouth Grove understands that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to Rachel Whittle, Safeguarding, Attendance and Admissions Lead through [admin@plymouthgrove.manchester.sch.uk](mailto:admin@plymouthgrove.manchester.sch.uk)

Within school we regularly analyse school attendance data, families who are falling below 96% or who have 2-3 unauthorised absence days (4-6 sessions) will be issued a letter of notice for improvement and invited in for an attendance panel meeting. The panel meetings will be used to address any concerns or





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issues with attendance. Early Help Assessments will be offered and parent contracts will be set up with school to help support attendance and punctuality, and eliminate the risk of a fine.

### **What happens if my child has a period of unauthorised absence?**

One of the main changes from the Department for Education is how **sanctions for unauthorised absence are used**.

If you take an unauthorised holiday in term time or have other periods of unauthorised absence the headteacher may request that Manchester City Council issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice). If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether a national threshold has been met – this is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 days) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks or a first unauthorised holiday taken within term time.

If there was a second period of unauthorised absence over a 10 week block or a second holiday taken in term time within a three-year period then a second penalty notice could be issued, and this would be at the higher rate of £160.

Further periods of absence within three years, could mean that you are taken to court with no option of a penalty notice, and/or will be directed to work with Children's Social Services for educational neglect.

These rules are coming into force across the country on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 as part of the Department for Education's drive to improve school attendance

**Term-time holidays** are not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.





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However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances and in such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance. The headteacher will carefully consider each request on an individual basis.

Please get in touch with Rachel Whittle or Julia Scott, Deputy headteacher with any further questions, and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

I have also attached the Poster for the Statutory Action Escalation Pathway for attendance. The School website will be updated under attendance in line with the new policy and a new attendance policy will be available on the school website ready for the start of school in September 2024.

Thank you for your co-operation and commitment in ensuring your child is in school every day.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Scott

Deputy Headteacher

