

Tel: 0118 974 6194 (Direct Line)
Email: James.Edmondson@wokingham.gov.uk
Fax: 0118 977 0637
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**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Children's Services
Education Welfare Service
Brambles Area Team
Budges Gardens
Wokingham
RG40 1PX
Tel: (0118) 974 6194
Fax: (0118) 977 0637

To: Parents at Oaklands Junior and Infant Schools

Dear Parent,

RE: PENALTY NOTICES

I am writing to clarify the current situation with regards to Penalty Notices. These have been in operation for a number of years and under the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct are able to be issued where there is regular unauthorised absence and parents receive a 15 day warning period. Generally, they are used for Year 11 pupils, but also for pupils in other years when considered appropriate.

Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays have been put in place in the last year and are used for **all pupils whether primary or secondary**. They are designed to discourage parents from taking holidays in term-time and also tie up with Department of Education advice to Headteachers this September not to authorise holidays except in "exceptional" circumstances. The warning regarding the possibility of receiving a Penalty Notice for unauthorised holiday is written on the "leave of absence/holiday form". (All penalty notices are issued by the Education Welfare Service).

I have prepared a press release regarding school attendance and penalty notices for unauthorised holidays which should be "released" soon. Whilst overall school attendance in Wokingham is good, a considerable amount of school time is lost due to holiday absence and addressing this is a key aim of the Penalty Notice process. I would also add that most other Local Authorities have in place Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays.

Yours sincerely,

James Edmondson
Principal Education Welfare Officer