



LING MOOR
A PRIORY ACADEMY

**Information about Absence
and
Fixed Penalty Notices**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are parents responsible for their child's attendance at school?

Yes. By law, parents whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and registered at school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do so then they may be guilty of an offence and can be issued a penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What's the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence?

It is important to remember that any absence during term time destroys the continuity of your child's education and may affect their achievement.

Only the academy, in the context of the law, can authorise absence.

Authorised absence is where the school has given permission in advance for a pupil to be away as the absence request has met the **exceptional circumstances** criteria. Alternatively, the school has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence i.e. absence due to illness. The Headteacher determines the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. All other absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

Is my child entitled to time off school for family holidays?

No. Parents do not have the right for their child to have leave of absence for a holiday and are expected to take their holidays when the school is closed. The headteacher has discretionary power to grant leave under exceptional circumstances but is under no obligation to do so.

What do we mean by 'exceptional circumstances'?

The fundamental principles of defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.



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What are Fixed Penalty Notices?

A fixed Penalty Notice is a fine. They are issued to parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

When will the Academy issue a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Academy complies with the Code of Conduct issued by Lincolnshire County Council (LSS). As such LCC will issue Fixed Penalty Notices on behalf of the Academy as and when required.

Fixed Penalty notices will be issued in circumstances where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six week period.

Parents will always be forewarned of the possible issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice through a Fixed Penalty Notice Formal Warning letter.

How are they issued? How much is the fine?

Even though Ling Moor is an Academy, the Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by and paid to Lincolnshire County Council.

Use of fixed penalty notices will be restricted to two per child per academic year. In situations where a parent meets the criteria for more than one penalty notice to be issued, because there is more than one child with irregular school attendance, multiple issues may occur. Where a child resides with two parents a separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent.



If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, parents will pay £60, per parent and per child to the Local Authority. In reality this means that a two parent family with two children will be fined £240.

Where can I get further advice?

Always contact the school first as we are the only authority with the discretionary power to grant exceptional leave of absence in term time. Where you feel there is no alternative than to take your child out of school during term time, you should complete a request for absence form, which is available from school, at least one month prior to the holiday. The Headteacher will decide whether this can be authorised or not.

Please remember, if you take your child on holiday in term time without the Headteacher's authorisation, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

What are Ling Moor's exceptional circumstances criteria?

It is not possible to create a definitive list of circumstances under which absence may be authorised, however the academy has agreed the following circumstances may be considered exceptional. Requests for leave of absence which do not fall under these conditions will be considered on a case by case basis in consultation with the headteacher. Parents may be requested to provide supporting evidence in addition to the submission of a request for absence form.

1. Leave to attend the wedding of a close family member such as a parent or sibling. Where the event is not taking place in the locality an additional 2 days may be granted for travel purposes before and after the event.
2. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad that prevents contact during scheduled holiday time – note that supporting evidence may be requested by the headteacher which indicates that the absence cannot be taken during designated school holidays.
3. Up to one day's absence for children of families who are relocating out of the area in order to visit their new school.
4. Leave to visit seriously ill relatives.
5. Absence for bereavement of a close family member. This would be authorised for the funeral service only and travelling time, not extended leave.
6. Consideration for family recovery time following trauma or crisis. This does not allow for a family holiday to be taken during term time.
7. Absence for important religious observance, only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended to one off situations rather than regular recurring events.
8. Reasonable adjustments for pupils with special education needs or disabilities.
9. An educational 'event' that happens on a specific date and where an alternative date cannot be chosen.

Please note that NO leave of absence will be authorised during National Testing weeks, or if attendance is 90% or below.

