

September 2016

## **TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

### **Explaining legal action which may be taken**

### **A guide for parents and carers**

#### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **What does the law say about attendance at school?**

**The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.**

- As the parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age it is your duty under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that your child attends school regularly
  - 5 minutes late each day means three whole days lost each year
  - 17 days missed from school each year equates to a whole GCSE grade
  - Attendance affects learning
  - Attendance affects future outcomes
  - Attendance affects wellbeing and a sense of belonging
- **An Education Supervision Order *Children's Act 1989*:** The local authority can apply to the courts where attendance remains poor. A named education supervisor would be appointed to work with the family for up to 12 months to ensure that the young person receives full time education
- **School Attendance Order *Education Act 1996*:** If this is issued; parents would be directed to register their child at a school named by the local authority

*The definition of "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or who has care of the child.*

#### **We have received a Penalty Notice warning letter; what is this?**

- A Penalty Notice warning letter can be issued when a pupil has had 10 or more unauthorised sessions from school within a term or two consecutive half terms
- The warning letter gives you a monitoring period of 15 school days. If at the end of this period there has not been an improvement or an improvement has been made but not sustained, a Penalty Notice may be issued



# Education Welfare Service

## How much would we have to pay for a 'Penalty Fine'?

- **Each** parent/carer will have to pay £60.00 **per child**
- If this is not paid within 21 days, the payment increases to £120.00 **per child per parent**
- Payments will not be accepted after 28 days
- Payments cannot be paid in part or by instalments

## What will happen if we do not pay?

- The Local Authority will prosecute you in the Magistrates' Court
- If you are prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court and convicted you will have a criminal record and you may receive a fine of up to £1,000

## Sometimes parents/carers do not co-operate with the Education Welfare Service. What happens then?

**If you don't co-operate with the school and the Education Welfare Service, then prosecution will be considered.**

- The case would be heard in the Magistrates' Court and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment could be issued
- It will result in a criminal record

## Remember

Education Welfare Officers are there to help you and your child because they know how important attendance at school is to children's attainment, friendships, confidence and achievement. Their main aim is to support you and to work with you.

**Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer.**

**[educationwelfareservice@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:educationwelfareservice@cheshireeast.gov.uk)**

**You can also telephone the main office on: 01270 375277**

**Website: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ews](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ews)**

**Other leaflets are available to support you:**

- Taking children on holiday during term time - frequently asked questions - a guide for parents and carers
- Helping your child to attend school - the role of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) - a guide for parents and carers