# Mother faces fine after taking child on term-time holiday



A mother has faced legal consequences after taking her child out of primary school for a holiday during term time, resulting in a fine at the North Staffordshire Justice Centre. The incident has sparked discussions regarding the implications of term-time absences for families, particularly in light of special circumstances.

The cited parent, who remains unnamed for legal reasons, defended her decision to take her daughter, who has a health condition, on a family trip. The holiday, which took place in June 2024, turned into an unexpected ordeal when delays from a travel company's bankruptcy extended their return journey, causing her child to miss an additional two days of school.

Originally, the mother received a fixed penalty notice of £60 for her child’s absence. She attempted to pay the fine online, however, due to her dyslexia, she did not recognise the need to confirm the payment, leading to complications in the process. Speaking to the magistrates, she explained, "I'm dyslexic and I didn't realise you had to press a confirmation. The dates included school holidays - she was only absent from school a few days."

Despite the challenges faced during their return journey, the mother expressed her respect for the law, stating, "I cannot be held responsible for a transfer company not picking me up. I spent every penny I had to get home.” She emphasised her belief that her child needed time away with family after experiencing difficulties.

The child’s overall attendance record for the academic year was logged at 87 per cent, indicating that the absence was not frequent. Prior to the holiday, the mother had formally requested the time off from school, planning for the period to extend from May 23 to June 7.

In the court's ruling, magistrates imposed a £60 fine along with an additional £24 surcharge due to the outstanding payment. The magistrates' chair, Philip Taylor, stated, “You did try to make payment, but the responsibility is with you to make sure payment has gone through.”

In a related case, another mother was fined £660 for her daughter's absence from June 5 to June 13, 2024, while not in attendance at the hearing. The court noted that previous attempts by the school to reach the family were unsuccessful, and a follow-up call the subsequent day connected them to an international dial tone. The mother later clarified that they were abroad for a wedding at that time.

In addition to the fine, this Stoke-on-Trent based mother was ordered to pay a £264 surcharge and local authority costs totalling £92.78. The court's actions reflect ongoing judicial responses to attendance laws and their implications for families navigating unforeseen travel disruptions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.st-leonards-dunston.staffs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Staffordshire-County-Council-letter-to-parents-reference-holiday-fines.pdf> - This URL supports the discussion about changes in penalty notices for term-time absences in Staffordshire, including increased fines and the three-year rolling period for penalty notices.
* <https://bloxwichacademy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/New-Penalty-fines-for-holidays.pdf> - This resource provides information on the increased penalty fines for unauthorized absences during term time, effective from August 19, 2024.
* <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct-July-24-FINAL.pdf> - This document outlines Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices, emphasizing regular attendance and the legal duty of parents.
* <https://www.gov.uk/penalty-notice> - This URL provides general information on penalty notices in the UK, including when they are issued and how they are processed.
* <https://www.stoke.gov.uk/info/20088/school_attendance_and_absence/403/penalty_notices> - This webpage from Stoke-on-Trent City Council explains how penalty notices are used to address unauthorized absences, which aligns with the court cases described.