

Detention

When can a detention be held?

School staff have a statutory power to put pupils aged under 18 in detention after school sessions, and on some weekend and non-teaching days.

The times outside normal school hours when detention without parental consent may be given are evenings (as previously), plus weekends and certain non-teaching days (days which have been set aside wholly or mainly for members of staff to work but not to teach pupils, sometimes referred to as 'training days', 'INSET days' or 'non-contact days'). In the case of weekend detentions, this excludes a Saturday or Sunday which falls during, or at, a weekend immediately preceding or immediately following a half-term break.

Where detention takes place at a weekend or on an INSET day, the requirement for 24 hours' notice to be given to parents, schools should ensure that both parents and pupils are informed:

- What the day is going to be used for
- When the pupil is required to arrive and when they will depart, and that the family needs to ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the pupil to get to and from school
- Which members of staff the pupil should report to
- Whether uniform should be worn
- Whether the pupil needs to bring:
 - packed-lunch and drink
 - any medication
 - any coursework
 - other learning materials
 - That the school has a legal power to impose the disciplinary penalty of detention, and what the consequences would be for non-attendance

To whom does a detention apply?

The sanction of detention can only be applied to pupils aged under 18.

Notice of Detention

The school will give parents 24 hours' notice of detentions outside school sessions. The 24-hour notice period is intended to inform parents of where their child is expected to be, and to allow parents an opportunity to make alternative arrangements for travel for the child. The school will take careful account of the circumstances of the detention known to them, for example, family holidays and care duties, or other commitments of the family. However a mere inconvenience or disagreement with the penalty on the part of the parent is no excuse for non-attendance.

The required 24 hours' notice of a detention may be given by:

- A letter, memorandum or pro-forma delivered by pupil-post or by mail (allowing for the time this will take to be delivered and the fact that the 24 hours' notice requirement applies from the time that the notification is received by the parent).
- A signed, dated note by a teacher or staff member in a pupil-planner (acceptable if there is clearly stated expectation in the school information to parents, for example, the home-

school agreement or prospectus, that parents will read the planner every day for notes from school).

- An email or text notification may be used where schools have reason to be confident that the parent can be contacted reliably by this route, and where parents have previously signified agreement that communication of this sort can be sent to them via email or text.

Detention Activities

In a detention students can be asked to undertake a range of activities, including completing assessed coursework, undertaking tasks to assist staff (such as classroom-display work or materials preparation), and assisting staff with compensatory tasks which do not raise any health and safety or child-protection issues. These may include cleaning, litter picks etc, again providing health and safety issues are not compromised.

If the pupil walks out of the detention:

It is best to let a staff member deal with the pupil after leaving the room, the first aim being to point out the need to return to the detention, but the second position being to make clear that the pupils will be held to account for the action they have taken.

It is important to make clear to other pupils that the pupil has made choices and will be held to account for those choices. The purpose of this is to calm down other pupils.

A further and higher-level sanction may be imposed on the pupil. This higher-level sanction might be a fixed-period exclusion imposed by the head teacher.

If a pupil refuses to undertake the detention, or fails to arrive:

The school has a legal power to impose the disciplinary penalty of detention; the consequences of non-attendance is that a further and higher-level sanction may be imposed on the pupil. As stated above, this higher-level sanction might be a fixed-period exclusion imposed by the head teacher.

