

# FRAUD ALERT



The Council has recently received reports that parents are being targeted for non-payment of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised child absences. This type of scam is known as 'Mandate Fraud'. In a particular example, a parent received a telephone call claiming that she had a £500.00 penalty outstanding and could repay this in instalments. Luckily the parent realised that this was a potential 'scam' call, ended the call and informed the school and the police.

Parents must remain **VIGILANT** when receiving unsolicited telephone calls where financial information or a payment is required. Council officers who deal with the attempted recovery of fixed penalties for unauthorised child absence will **NOT** telephone parents asking for payment. The recovery of penalties such as these are done so by written correspondence only.

Furthermore, parents need to be made aware of the following advice from the Council's Corporate Fraud Team:

## **Advice to help prevent this type of fraud**

- Be cautious about who you talk to or notify with regards to your receipt of a fixed penalty for an unauthorised child absence. Even speaking to close friends can find its way onto social media where there is a potential for criminals to use this data for illicit purposes.
- If you have received a fixed penalty, deal directly with the telephone number on the penalty notification that you should have received. If you are unsure in any way, contact your child's school.
- If you do receive a telephone call such as this do not provide any personal information such as your child's name or the school where he or she attends. Note the date, time, telephone number of the call and name/gender of the person and any other information that may be useful.
- Report this and any other suspicious or suspected fraudulent activity to the Council's Corporate Fraud Team, who will share intelligence across the Public Sector National Fraud Network and either investigate on your behalf or notify the appropriate law enforcement agency.

If you have any questions in relation to this alert, please contact the Council's Corporate Fraud Team:

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