

FREE

# METRO

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**Keira: My cakes are rubbish but I'm good with a bow and arrow** »p33



Life&Style

Prized role: Coronation Street actress Julie Hesmondhalgh was among the big winners at the National Television Awards last night. She picked up a gong for her role as cancer-stricken Hayley Cropper, while the soap beat EastEnders as best serial drama PICTURE: GETTY

»p7



# A £60 fine if your child is late at school

PARENTS are being fined £60 each if their child turns up a few minutes late for lessons – and are being threatened with court if they fail to pay in time.

The strict measures have been introduced at one primary school where pupils are penalised if they miss registration ten times in a 12-week term.

Emerson Valley School, in Milton Keynes, says parents will get 21 days to pay their fines after which they double to £120 which has to be paid within 28 days.

It is the third school to adopt the system in the city where two penalty notices have

by **NICOLE LE MARIE**

been issued in the past year. The powers are available to any head teacher in the country but few are thought to have adopted them.

Chris McGovern, of the Campaign for Real Education, warned: 'They could undermine relations between school and parents – the cornerstone of any school's success.'

Emerson Valley, which is in special measures, said it hoped its stance would raise standards. The penalties are levied on each parent for each child who is late.

If parents refuse to pay, they could be pun-

ished in a magistrates' court and incur more costs. But an Emerson Valley spokesman said: 'The link between good attendance and pupils achieving well at school is clear.'

Milton Keynes Council said it had 'a borough-wide policy in place' although the decision on whether to use fines was left to each school. Most problems were resolved by issuing a warning letter, it added.

Netmums founder Siobhan Freegard said: 'Children who are frequently late to school are often from chaotic family backgrounds. Taking money away from struggling parents could just make a bad situation worse.'

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# TRAVEL

METRO

## A cruise with a Mekong view



Booking is now open for the Aqua Mekong (left). The boutique ship's cruises launch later this year and will take guests along the mighty Mekong River, between Cambodia and Vietnam. Aqua Expeditions already has two Peruvian-built boats that sail up the Amazon. This similarly luxurious vessel will have just 20 outward-facing suites, all with floor-to-ceiling windows

enabling guests to watch Asia float by. There will also be a spa and fitness centre, dining room, library, screening room and an observation deck with a swimming pool and lounge bar. **JM**

*From £1,822 for three nights aboard, including transfers, excursions and all food, wine and beer.*  
[www.aquaexpeditions.com](http://www.aquaexpeditions.com)