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**Executive Headteacher:** Mr S Arnold

**Head of School:** Mr P Lane

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

From the start of the autumn term 2024-25, there are some changes to our school policy regarding holidays in term time which I would like to share with you. I would like to emphasise that these are national regulations established by the Department for Education. The implementation of this change is not something we have control over as an individual school and we will not benefit financially from the administration of fines which go directly to the Local Authority.

Attendance is a national as well as a local concern. Government figures published recently confirmed that in the Autumn term of 2023, 16% of primary pupils were classed as persistently absent, 27% of secondary pupils. In a drive to address this decline in attendance, the DfE said that fines “must be considered if a child misses five days of school for unauthorised absence”. Schools’ daily registers will also be shared online with the DfE and Local Authorities. **These future changes regarding attendance documentation and regulations will come into force from August 2024.**

It is imperative that parents and carers understand these changes at the earliest opportunity, as we know that some parents may be considering booking holidays now which will no doubt apply for the new school year. **Holidays in term time are not permitted and cannot be authorised. Holidays of five days or more as per the above or where a child has holiday and has already amassed over 5 days of unauthorised absence will mean that a penalty notice is given.**

- There is a limit of two penalties and escalation in cases of repeat offences. A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. Therefore, from Autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate.
- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. (The £60 fine was introduced in 2013 and has not been increased in the 11 years since.) A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This can include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Please note that the school is merely the administrator of the penalty notice, we do not benefit from this in any fashion. Funds gained from any penalty notices are not given to individual schools, but rather to the Local Authorities. From August 2024 this will be the process that has to be followed, so parents should consider the serious implications of taking their child out of school during term time. If you have any questions regarding any of the details in this letter, please make contact with either myself, Miss. Billingsley or the school office.

Kind regards,

Mr. Lane (Head of School).

From tiny acorns mighty oaks grow...

