

20<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Subject: Important Update on Government Changes to Penalties for Holidays During Term Time**

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to inform you about recent changes introduced by the Department for Education regarding penalties for taking holidays during school term time. As part of a nationwide effort to prioritise attendance and ensure that all children have access to the full curriculum, the Government has introduced stricter guidelines and penalties for unauthorised absences due to term-time holidays.

**What Are the Changes?**

The following changes came into effect on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 for Penalty Notice Fines issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences and leave of absence from school. Here are some key points:

- Penalty notices will be issued to both parents regardless of whether they cohabit or not.
- Penalty notice fees will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.
- Penalty notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period. The 10 sessions can be accumulated by lateness after registration closes at 9.10 a.m. or any further unauthorised absences.
- Cases found guilty in a Magistrates court can show on a parents future DBS certificate, due to *'failure to safeguard children.'*

<b>First Unauthorised Absence</b>	
1	<p>The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or any unauthorised absence the amount will be:</p> <p>£160 to each parent, per child if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.</p>
<b>Second Unauthorised absence</b>	
2	<p>The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or any other unauthorised absence will be:</p> <p>£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.</p>
<b>Third and other absences that occur within a 3 year period</b>	
3	<p>The third time a term leave of absence or any other unauthorised absence occurs, the local authority will consider other enforcement options available to them. This could include a fine up to £2500 per parent, per child and would be dealt with by the magistrate court.</p>

**Authorised Absences**

While we understand that there are occasions when families may need to request time off during term time, the Department for Education (DfE) has made it clear that schools can only authorise absences in "exceptional circumstances." Family holidays do not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. If you believe that your situation is exceptional, we encourage you to speak with us as early as possible. However, please note

that the decision to authorise an absence lies with the school and is subject to the Government's stringent regulations.

### **The Importance of Attendance**

Regular attendance is essential for your child's education. Research shows that children with higher attendance levels are more likely to succeed academically and feel more engaged with their learning. Missing school can leave gaps in knowledge and make it harder for your child to catch up. As a school, we are committed to supporting all of our students and working closely with families to ensure that any barriers to good attendance are addressed.

We understand that family holidays are an important part of life, and while it can be tempting to take advantage of cheaper rates during term time, we ask that you consider the impact this has on your child's education and the potential penalties involved.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the new rules, or if you would like to discuss attendance in general, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our school attendance team. Please click on the [link](#) to take you to their contact details. We are here to support you and ensure the best possible outcomes for all of our pupils

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Kind regards,



Claire Magill  
Deputy Headteacher