Exeter
a learning community

Tuesday 1st October 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians

Government Changes to Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age the right to access an education appropriate to their needs. It is a legal responsibility of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child receives that education. Attendance at school is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The Department for Education have significantly toughened the law in relation to school attendance and have now revised guidance which become mandatory from September 2024. This refers to absence and lateness. Please ensure you have read the following information and review any holiday plans during term-time you may have as a family.

Changes to National Absence Thresholds From September 2024

Schools have to consider a penalty notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Half a day (am or pm) is considered as a "session". The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons would trigger a penalty notice. The 10-school week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 sessions in the Autumn term.

National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices (fines)

The new penalty notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice for each child who is absent. For example, 2 parents and 3 children, each parent will receive 3 penalty notices for £160 each, with a family total of £960 in fines. The fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. The first penalty notice will be considered your first offence.
- The next time an offence occurs, within 3 years of the date of the first penalty noticed is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days, with no reduction.
- The third time an offence occurs this will be presented to Magistrates court for prosecution. Where a child is absent and it is believed they are absent without a valid reason, we will carry out a home visit and see the child on or before the third day of absence. If the absence meets the threshold explained above, you may be issued a fixed penalty notice as detailed above.

Please review any holiday plans you have for term time this year to ensure you are not issued with a penalty fine or prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Penalty Notice (fines) for Lateness

The new penalty notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice for each child who is absent. Absence can be whole days of school missed, part days missed or lateness - all count towards the penalty notice. For example, if your child was late six times within a term, and had two days of absence without good reason, a two-parent family would be issued with £320 of penalty notices.
- If lateness to school continues, within three years of the date the first penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child, to be paid within 28 days, with no reduction available.
- The third time an offence occurs this will be presented to the Magistrates court for prosecution.

Sickness Absence

It is important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication.

Please consider NHS guidance: Is my child too ill for school? – NHS (www.nhs.uk) when making your decision whether to keep your child at home.

To report an absence, please call the school on: 01536 204765 or send a message via the My child at school app. no later than 9.00am.

If you have any concerns or questions around attendance, please contact our Attendance Officer, Mrs Shalgosky.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Doherty Mrs Crawford

Head of School Head of School