The Wolds Federation

Executive Headteacher Mrs E Harros

www.thewoldsfederation.co.uk

"The child Jesus grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom gaining favour with God and with people." Luke 2:54

8th July 2024

Dear Parents & Carers,

New National Framework for Penalty Notices

From August 19th there will be a new national framework introduced regarding penalty notices for school attendance. This framework sits alongside updated guidance from the DFE called Working Together to Improve School Attendance. This date may seem a little odd, but this legislation applies across the whole of the UK and August 19th is when Scottish schools resume school after their summer break.

Attached to this email is a leaflet, written by the educational welfare team from the Local Authority, which explains the new, much more rigorous framework and reflects the changes in legislation. The aim of the framework is to reduce the increasing number of children absent due to term time holidays and to address the increasing numbers of days of unauthorised absences in schools. This is now referred to as irregular attendance.

Please note, these new procedures have not been implemented at a school level or a Local Authority level but at a national one. It is my duty, as headteacher, to make sure that the framework is adhered to. Generally, attendance at all three schools in the federation is good but I would like to draw your attention to the following points.

A first offence penalty notice is now £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A penalty notice would be issued after 5 consecutive days of term time leave. If a second penalty notice is issued within a 3-year period, then the fine remains the same at £160. However, if there is a third offence or any further offence within a three-year period then no fine will be issued and the case will be presented directly to the Magistrates' Court. A magistrate's fine can be up to £2500 and this offence may show up on a parent's future DBS as "failure to safeguard a child's education"

Unauthorised absence is not just term time holidays. An unauthorised absence is also recorded if your child is late after the close of the school register at 9am. An unathorised absence is also given if your child is absent without a reason, e.g. if your child is ill but you don't contact the school to give reason for the absence or fail to respond when we contact you. It could, therefore, be the case that if you were to take a term time holiday for 4 days and then had 2 late 'after registration has closed' marks, within 10 weeks this would also trigger a penalty fine.

For clarification, one school day has 2 attendance marks, one for the morning and one for the afternoon.

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Since I am now no longer able to authorise a term-time holiday under any circumstances the title of the application form will change. From September 2024, we will ask you to complete an “absence from school for exceptional circumstances form”. Examples of exceptional circumstances are wide ranging and could include attendance at family funerals, weddings, or taking part in sporting events. Holidays in term time do not count as exceptional circumstances.

Links to the national guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance__applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Yours faithfully,

E Harros

Mrs E. Harros
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