

28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Important – Significant changes to issuing penalty notices for leave in term time.**

Please find below important information for parents/carers regarding increased penalty fines for unauthorised absence for holidays in term time and other changes.

You will be aware there is a great deal of focus, at a national level, on improving school attendance and as a school we recognise the impact of absence on student progress and personal development. Our target for all students is a minimum of 96% attendance across the school year, if a student was to fall below this to 90% attendance for example, this would equate to 100 missed lessons. This would then leave significant gaps in learning and missed opportunities. For further details about our school attendance processes please look on the school website.

The Department for Education has recently published a number of changes to issuing penalty notices for leave in term time, these will come into effect from the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

The changes to the law are introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. As these changes are significant, we would urge all parents/carers to take notice of them and the implications of pupils taking unauthorised absence for holidays.

### **New two-penalty notice limit in a three-year period.**

The three-year rolling period starts for parents when the first penalty notice is issued to them after the 19 August 2024.

The first Penalty Notices for leave in term time will increase to £160 per parent per child but can be reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued within three years of the first penalty notice, then this will be at a fixed rate of £160 per parent per child, with no reduction for early payment.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued within the three-year period; therefore, the county council will deal with any further unauthorised leave through prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If the parent is found guilty, the potential fine is up to £1000.

### **National threshold for issuing penalty notices.**

There is a new national threshold for issuing penalty notices which has been set at 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

However, if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

An example of this would be where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

The school will also have a duty to report cases to Birmingham City Council where a child is absent for 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of illness.

As a reminder, if your child is absent from school due to illness, you must notify the school each day before 8.30am, via the Studybugs app, again more information can be found on the school website. It is important that we are notified of an absence in a timely manner, before the start of the school day, in order to avoid the absence being classed as unauthorised.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child attends school so that they continue to progress and develop.

Yours faithfully

**The Leadership Team**