

FEATHERSTONE ACADEMY

Dear Parents/Carers

You will recall that last year the Department for Education (DfE) introduced changes to the law regarding parents taking their children out of school during term time. This in turn meant that the Local Authority had to amend its Code of Conduct which sets out how it will implement these changes and its use of Penalty Notices to ensure we promote the highest standards for attendance.

The Local Authorities Code of Conduct in relation to the use of Penalty Notices has recently been changed again, and we are obliged to inform you of these amendments:

The main changes made are:

Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence

- Removing the requirement for attendance to be below 87% before a Penalty Notice can be issued.
- Clarifying that a parent can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.
- Confirming that ten sessions of unauthorised absence do not have to be consecutive and only two sessions have to be for unauthorised leave of absence.
- Confirming that the period for calculating the ten sessions will be based on the previous three school terms.

Penalty Notice for Persistent Absence

- Parents will now only receive one warning notice period for improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all unauthorised absences from school and support Head teachers in challenging parents who fail to meet their legal obligations.

As a reminder the new regulations only allow Head teachers to authorise requests for 'holiday leave' if there are **exceptional circumstances**. **Any such requests for leave of absence (holiday) is required to be put in writing to the Head teacher, in advance.**

The above changes have come into effect **from 23rd February 2015**.

PENALTY NOTICES INFORMATION

A fine of £60 per parent / carer (per child) if paid within 21 days from the date of issue. If this Penalty is not paid, the amount rises to £120. If after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the Local Authority will prosecute you under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to a hearing in the Magistrates Court and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

Kind regards

Caroline Jobling

Head teacher.