



Hipsburn Primary School, Lesbury, ALNWICK, Northumberland. NE66 3PX

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Headteacher Mr Kevin Moloney

17/10/24

Attendance

Dear Parents,

I am writing to provide further updates regarding the changes within the new statutory guidance relating to attendance and term time holidays, which took effect from 19th August 2024.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to make sure their child receives that education. Attendance at school is essential for students 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 published revised guidance that is now statutory which schools must demonstrate they have adhered to.

Please ensure you read the following information and particularly review any holiday plans during term-time you may have as a family.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents/carers must request permission in advance from school for any leave of absence for any reason, including holidays. Headteachers cannot grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and cannot grant permission retrospectively. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. The 'H' code (authorised holiday) no longer exists in the new absence codes, to reflect the change in policy as under no circumstances is a holiday to be authorised.

National Thresholds

Under the new national framework, Fixed Penalty Notices will be considered when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – 5 days in total.

Late Arrivals

Please note: students who arrive in school after registration closes but before the end of the morning 'session' will receive a U code, which is an unauthorised absence for that session.

Penalty Notices

In September 2024, Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents/carers will rise to £80 per parent, per child (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within between 22 and 28 days).



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Example a family with two children meeting or exceeding the 10 missed sessions, each parent will be issued with two Penalty Notices of £80 in the first instance (four in total).

Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action would be pursued. Under the new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period.

Note that where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent/carer for the same child, the charge increases to £160 per parent, per child.

| First Penalty Notice | | |
|----------------------|--|--|
| | Penalty Notice per parent / carer: If paid within 21 days | Penalty Notice per parent / carer: If NOT paid within 21 days |
| 1 child | £80 | £160 |
| 2 children | £160 | £320 |
| 3 children | £240 | £480 |

| Second Penalty Notice | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| | Penalty Notice per parent / carer If paid within 28 days | If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. gov.uk-School attendance and absence |
| 1 child | £160 | |
| 2 children | £320 | |
| 3 children | £480 | |

If a third offence is committed within a three-year rolling period, legal action/prosecution would be considered.

Our school does not receive any of the monies paid by parents for penalty notices issued by the Local Authority.

More detailed information can be found at: Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK



To date, our policy currently does not utilise the fining tool in the first instance for attendance issues. We firmly believe that fostering close and productive relationships with both parents and pupils is essential in promoting high attendance levels.

The expectation set by Ofsted is clear; schools must make every reasonable effort to achieve the highest possible attendance rates. It has been consistently shown that regular attendance significantly correlates with students' academic achievements.

While we are committed to encouraging attendance through positive engagement, it is also important to note that, as a last resort, we may consider the imposition of fines for pupils whose attendance remains significantly below expected levels. The Department for Education (DfE) has made it explicit that 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect', reinforcing our responsibility to ensure that every child is receiving the education they deserve.

In line with our safeguarding duty under the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidelines, we take attendance issues with the utmost seriousness. Therefore, we kindly ask for your cooperation and support in addressing any attendance concerns that may arise. Open communication between home and school is vital, and we encourage you to reach out to us promptly if your child is experiencing any difficulties that may affect their ability to attend school regularly.

All parents/carers are to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness) - through direct telephone contact with the main school office on 01665 830210.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, which must be submitted in advance. Under the new statutory guidance retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore recorded as unauthorised.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

We know that is a significant amount of information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Moloney
Headteacher

Allison Wort
Chair of Governors

