

St. Margaret's C.E. Junior School

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19th September 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

Changes to Attendance Legislation and Penalty Notices for Leave in Term Time

The Department for Education has published new regulations called 'Working together to improve school attendance,' taking effect from 19th August 2024. This details a more structured approach to attendance as well as changes to the legislation relating to issuing penalty notices. We wanted to share key updates with you to enable you to consider the details and potential consequences of taking your children out of school during term time.

I know you understand that headteachers must support and follow the government guidance and legislation which makes it clear that **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances. In practice, there are very few occasions where requests meet this criterion. Staffordshire County Council and school governors support this, therefore the vast majority of requests will be 'Unauthorised' and recorded as such in the attendance register.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance.

To reflect the commitment of the government to ensuring high school attendance for all children, the penalties for unauthorised absence in term time are now as follows:

For a first offence the penalty notice fine would be:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a second offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence, every new offence within the 3-year period will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. If the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child.

We hope you will be able to plan your leave within the 13 weeks school holidays.

Yours sincerely

David Hugill

Mr D Hugill
Headteacher