

29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Re: Important information regarding the use of penalties for unauthorised absence**

We are required to write each year to notify all families about our approach to attendance, in particular that we are a school who uses Fixed Penalty Notices. It is important that we have a clear approach to attendance as this is such an important aspect of school. The majority of students have high attendance and this will have no bearing on them; however, it is important that we make the regulations regarding absence clear to all.

It is the policy of this school not to authorise absence for holidays during term-time. While advance permission can be given in exceptional circumstances, this is rare and can only be granted by the Head Teacher. Any such request should be addressed to the Headteacher in writing before the holiday is taken and it should not be assumed that permission will be granted.

If a term-time holiday is taken without permission, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral may be made to the County Attendance Team. This may result in the issue of an Education Penalty Notice under section 444A Education Act 1996 in respect of each absent child, to each parent/carer. The current penalty is £60 per parent per child, rising to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days.

Penalty notices are intended as an alternative to prosecution. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days, the usual consequence is a Magistrates' Court prosecution for the underlying section 444(1) Education Act 1996 offence of failure to secure regular school attendance. If further instances of unauthorised absence occur despite a penalty notice having previously been issued, or if the child's attendance is a wider matter of concern, the local authority may consider prosecution in any event.

We would ask that all parents/carers consider any request for leave very carefully and work with us to promote full attendance and access to education.

Full details of our Attendance Policy can be found on our website: <http://wgswitney.org.uk/attendance>

Yours sincerely,



Mr R Shadbolt  
Headteacher



Mr N Middleton  
Assistant Headteacher