

## **Attendance and Punctuality Update from the government**

Since the pandemic, pupils' attendance has dramatically decreased across all schools. The government is introducing drastic measures to fight this issue. Starting on August 19th 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced a new National Framework concerning Unauthorised Absence and Penalty Notices. Unauthorised Absence includes term-time holidays or any absence that has not been approved by the school. Please be aware that this is a nationwide policy that must be followed by all schools in England.

### **National Threshold**

The National threshold for when a penalty notice is given is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can consist of any type of unauthorised absence.

The 10-school-week period can span over different terms or school years. The following changes will be put into effect:

#### **First Offence**

- The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term-time leave of absence or unauthorised absence, the amount will be:
  - £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days;
  - reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

#### **Second Offence (within 3 years)**

- The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be:
  - £160 per parent, per child within 28 days.

#### **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**

- The third time an offence is committed, a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.
  - Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500
  - Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Please note that all of our pupils' attendance is regularly checked by Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Improvement Officers. Therefore, the school does not have any discretion regarding term-time holidays. Moreover, the school will have to adhere to the new National Framework.