

Water Primary School

Happiness, Health & Opportunity

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Friday 18th October 2024

Dear Families,

Pupil Attendance – Use of Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

As you are aware, Headteachers cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant the granting of leave. Additionally, the Government have introduced a National Framework for Penalty Notices which can be found in the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance](#) and became statutory in August 2024. This guidance states:

‘All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.’

In light of the above, the Governing Body has felt it necessary to act in order to comply with statutory guidance. Therefore, the following changes have been made to our school attendance policy and procedures.

These changes will come into force immediately from **Wednesday 30th October**. Leave requests which are made before this date but will take place after the new policy is introduced will be considered under the new policy. The full policy is available on the school website.

Leave during term time will not be authorised except where parents can demonstrate the reasons to be exceptional or unavoidable

- Absence which is not considered **by school** to be exceptional or unavoidable will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be informed of this on each occasion
- In accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices, school may request that Lancashire County Council issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence. Penalty notices may be requested in respect of term time holidays which are taken without authorisation, pupils who persistently arrive late for school after the registers have closed and all other unauthorised absence
- When a pupil is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (i.e. their attendance is at risk of falling below 90%) parents will be informed of this immediately and will be asked to work with school in order to improve attendance



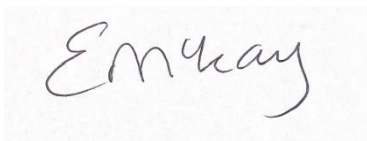
- School will consider the reasons provided by parents for each absence/period of absence and decide whether the absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. There may be occasions when school will require supporting evidence before authorisation can be granted.

One of the main reason's families prefer in-term holidays is the noticeable drop in travel costs during school time. To help ease this financial strain, we have extended the October and May half-terms by including two INSET days. We hope this change encourages families to make the most of these longer breaks when planning their holidays, which could help them save money as well as reducing the time your children are absent from school.

We hope that parents will acknowledge the limitations placed on schools with regard to granting leave and authorising absence for other reasons. By ensuring that your child/ren attends school regularly, and on time, the use of legal interventions can be avoided.

Please contact school if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Elizabeth McKay
Headteacher

