

15th July 2024

Dear Parents and carers,

We are writing to share some important updates about our school's attendance procedures following new National regulations for all schools from the Department for Education (DfE) coming into effect from **19th August 2024**.

The reason that the DfE have made these changes is that Nationally:

- Students with attendance below 91.2% are less likely to pass their GCSE Maths and English exams than students with better attendance.
- 81% of children who are sentenced for any offence or that receive police cautions are Persistently Absent (PA) from school (PA = Attendance at or below 90%).

The DfE updates are designed to help all students to attend school regularly and on time. As a school, we are under statutory duty to follow this guidance and, for those students that have poor attendance or punctuality, there will be closer monitoring, support to improve and where these are not successful in improving attendance or punctuality, increased fines and possible prosecution may be imposed. Our aim as always will be to avoid the latter as much as possible by working with you to help improve attendance. It is important that you understand how this may affect you.

National Threshold

The DfE have set out a single consistent national threshold of unauthorised absence, for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England – which is set at 10 sessions (**usually equivalent to 5 school days**) within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, unless the absence is due to an exceptional circumstance.

Please note: *The Department of Education 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.*

First Offence

The first penalty Notice issues for unauthorised absence will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

- **Per Parent, Per Child:** For example, 3 siblings absent during term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Second Offence (within 3 years of the first offence)

The second time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised absence, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. This rate is not reduced if paid within 21 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years of the last offence)

On the third offence a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case could be presented straight to the magistrates Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2500.

With this new framework in place, we understand that sometimes absences are unavoidable, and we are here to support you and your child as much as possible.

Please do contact your child's Year co-ordinator if there are any barriers which may hinder your child's attendance, so we can work together to address them, before any of the above comes into effect.

Kind regards,

Mr J Lampard
Assistant Headteacher

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Farlingaye High School Attendance pages:

<https://www.farlingaye.suffolk.sch.uk/ATTENDANCE-MATTERS/>