



Handale Primary School, West Park Avenue, Loftus, TS13 4RL

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Friday 6th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Attendance changes from September 2024

I am writing to you because the Department for Education (DfE) have introduced new attendance guidance for schools for managing and supporting school attendance. They have also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices and amended the law. These changes came into effect from the 19 August 2024 and all schools across the country are expected to follow the new statutory guidance. I would like to draw your attention to some of the key information below.

At Handale Primary School we aim for children to achieve at least 96% attendance for a full school year. There are clear links between poor attendance and poor attainment. If children are absent from school, they may miss key learning opportunities resulting in gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This can significantly impact upon their learning and development. Absence from school should only occur when a child is unfit to learn, where there is an exceptional circumstance, or when your child has a day of religious observance.

If you have exceptional circumstances and wish to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete the request form (available from our school office) and return it as soon as possible.

Support first

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. We will promote school attendance and provide support when a student is struggling to attend. This may mean that we raise the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a couple of days off ill. This is not because we don't believe you. By working with you, the school can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. We may identify other underlying issues that are making your child reluctant to attend school and be able to help you and your child. For this to be successful we would ask you to support and work with the school.

National framework for penalty notices

To provide consistency, the Government have introduced a new national framework for schools and Local Authorities. All schools are now required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 sessions (5 school days) for unauthorised reasons.

Fines are issued by the Local Authority and with effect from August 2024, the fine for school absences for each parent will be £80 per child if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.



Fines per parent will be capped at two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Term time holidays

Students should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time. A family holiday is not an acceptable reason for a child to miss school. If a student is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the matter for the consideration of a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

We appreciate that there are a lot of changes. For many of you these will have little or no impact. However, if your child is struggling at school and you are worried about any aspect of your child's attendance, please speak with your child's teacher or Miss Tully. We are here to explore what support can be provided to help your child to attend school regularly.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Padgett
Headteacher

