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Dear Parents/Carers,

Changes to Attendance and Penalty Notices

The Department of Education have shared with schools and Local Authorities changes to attendance guidance that will become statutory and must be implemented from the 19th August 2024. These changes must be made by all schools and Local Authorities across the country, with the aim of ensuring consistent approaches. This will have a significant impact on the procedures currently applied at Ingleby Mill Primary. The changes along with references to Department of Education documentation are attached.

This change of fixed penalty will be issued from the 19th August regardless of previous letter notification with the old penalty costs. This is not a school decision but part of the new guidance becoming statutory. Traditionally at Ingleby Mill, where a leave of absence request has not met the exceptional circumstances threshold and therefore the absence deemed unauthorised, the statutory letter has been sent to parents but no referrals for fixed penalties have been made.

To be clear, school do not issue the fixed penalties but do make the referrals to the Local Authority who then issue the fixed penalty notice. Any appeal would be made directly to the team at the Local Authority. Since taking up post as Head Teacher, I have maintained this procedure and no referrals for fixed penalties have been made.

Given this has been a long-standing procedure at Ingleby Mill, it does not sit well with me that with limited notice, fixed penalties at this higher rate will be issued. I have therefore made the decision and liaised with the Governing Body, that any leave of absence request submitted before Friday 19th July 2024 (last day of term) that does not meet exceptional circumstances and therefore deemed unauthorised **will not** be referred for a fixed penalty notice. After this date all leave of absence requests submitted to school which do not meet exceptional circumstances will be processed under the new Department for Education procedures, including referrals for fixed penalty notices.

I will be liaising with the Local Authority over the summer to update our Attendance Policy to reflect this statutory change.

With all of these changes, the priority is supporting a young person to access school every day, ensuring they have the reasonable adjustments, interventions and early help to engage in their learning. Within this I will clearly reflect the importance and duty of school to support children and families with attendance.

If your child is finding attending school difficult, is feeling anxious about attending school, or needs help to access their education, please contact the office to arrange a time to come into school to discuss any reasonable adjustments or support available for your child.

Every school day matters. If you have any queries, questions or concerns, please either contact the school office or email office@inglebymill.org.uk.

Yours Sincerely

Janis Williams

Head Teacher



Changes to Attendance and Penalty Notices

These changes have been broken down into 4 categories:

1) A new National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices

Any attendance penalty notices, issued after the 19th August 2024, will be issued in line with the new regulations. The new Penalty Notice regulations are:

- Each parent will be issued a separate penalty notice for each child who is absent.
For example, 2 parents and 3 children- each parent will receive 3 penalty notices for £160 each child, with a family total of £960 in fines;
- The fine amount will be £160 per parent per child, paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days;
- This will be considered your first offence;
- The next time an offence occurs within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice is issued, the fine amount will be £160 per parent per child, paid within 28 days, with no reduction;
- The third time an offence occurs, this will be presented to Magistrate's court with no penalty notice issued (fines may be up to £2500 per parent per child).

This will include Term Time Leave fines, and Irregular Attendance. Term time leave does not just include holidays. Where a child is absent, and it is believed they are absent due to term time leave, schools will be expected to carry out a home visit and see the child on or before the 3rd school day of absence.

For irregular attendance - Where a child has unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in any 10-week period, the school should consider escalation to prosecution. Sessions refer to each half a school day, with most schools having 2 sessions each day. The school should consider the reasons for the absence, the support already offered and the engagement of the parents/carers and young person. These 10 sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks, or unauthorised absence.

It is therefore important to notify school every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and, where appropriate, evidence of medical appointments or prescribed medication. Schools will consider NHS Guidance Health Protection in Children and Young People Settings, Including Education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and Is My Child Too Ill for School? - NHS (www.nhs.uk), when making their decision whether to authorise absence due to illness.

2) Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance

The Department for Education have updated the Working Together to Improve School Attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk) available on the DFE website. This clarifies the expectations for parents, schools and the Local Authority to promote the importance of regular attendance at school, and to provide ideas for support and interventions when a young person is not attending school on a regular basis.

3) Regulation changes to modernise school attendance and admission registers.

The predominant change is around the use of attendance coding for schools to use on their attendance register. This may mean that you see different marks on your child's attendance certificate, including sub codes for example C2 for a reduced timetable, or Y4 for school closed due to weather conditions. The H code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed, therefore Head teachers can no longer authorise term time leave (unless there are exceptional circumstances covered by the C code) and must request an attendance penalty notice if there are 5 or more days of unauthorised absence. Another change to these regulations is that parents must accept the school place offered prior to their child going on school roll. Therefore, if you have been offered a school place that was not one of your preferences, you must either accept the school place or notify the Local Authority how you intend to educate your child.

4) Regulations will come into force on the 19th August 2024 whereby all attendance data must be shared by all state-funded schools. This means that your child's attendance data will be shared with the Department for Education and the Local Authority every day. This will be live data which will allow the DFE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and see improvement in attendance, and will allow the Local Authority to provide advice, support, and Early Help services. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends (for example, a child reported as ill the same week each year, or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence).