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Thursday, 19th September 2024

Changes to Attendance Guidelines

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to inform you of significant changes to attendance guidelines, which took effect from Monday 19th August 2024. The DfE have issued new statutory guidance, which can be found attached to this letter along with our Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy and term dates for 2025/26.

At Green Ridge, we strongly discourage parents/carers from taking their children out of school during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Absence from school results in missed education. We endeavour to publish our term dates early on and are available on our website so that parents can plan their holiday and travel arrangements accordingly. Our attendance target is set at 97% and our commitment is to achieve or better that figure. You may not be aware that pupil absence is monitored by Ofsted and has implications for us as a school on the quality of provision offered.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of our expectations regarding punctuality. The register is taken at 8.45am for pupils in Early Years and Key Stage One and 8.50am for pupils in Key Stage Two. Pupils in school at this time will receive a present (/) mark on the register. If students arrive at school between the register closing and 9:00am they will receive a late (L) mark. If students arrive at school after 9:00am they will receive a late (U) code, which means that the whole of the morning session is then an unauthorised absence. This will affect their overall attendance figure.

To support families who may be struggling to get their children to school on time each day, the school attendance and welfare team will identify those pupils with poor or low attendance, and as necessary will arrange attendance meetings with parents/carers to put a plan in place to address the attendance issues. You should also note that poor or low attendance may also result in a referral to the County Attendance Team where a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued to parents and carers.

National Threshold

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the

Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term). Please note that any leave of absence taken before Monday 19th August 2024 will not be taken into consideration when completing referrals. It is also important to note that only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period.

First Penalty Notice

As per the national threshold, the first fixed penalty notice will be charged at £80 per parent/carer per child, if paid within 21 days. This will increase to £160 per parent/carer per child, if paid between 21 and 28 days and could lead to further court proceedings if unpaid. Please note that a parent/carer is considered someone who lives with the child and has day-to-day care of them, whether they are a biological parent/carer or not. For example, this includes those with parental responsibility, e.g. step-parents/carers.

Second Penalty Notice

As per the national threshold, if the same parent/carer in respect of the same pupil is referred for a second time, the second fixed penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Third Penalty Notice

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The new guidance emphasises the importance of punctuality and attendance in supporting students' educational outcomes and overall wellbeing. We appreciate your cooperation and support in helping your child maintain regular attendance and punctuality.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this change, please do not hesitate to contact me. As a reminder, in line with school policy, the Headteacher and Governors are not able to authorise absence for holidays during term time.

Yours sincerely,



Miss. Katie South

Lower Key Stage Two Assistant Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion