



Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Attendance

The pupils of this school are justifiably proud of their attendance records over the last few years. They realise that good attendance is essential for genuine learning to take place, to provide a platform for progress in all subject areas. Less than 5% of Freeston Students were Persistent Absent during 2008-2009 one of the best records in Wakefield.

Regular school attendance is very important and any absence is detrimental to a child's education. Government research shows that 17 days lost learning in a school year can result in a drop of one grade at GCSE and SATs level. The only valid reason for non attendance is illness.

Please contact school before 8.50am whenever your child is absent to explain the reason for the absence. If you know in advance that your child will be away (e.g. a visit to the dentist or clinic) please inform the attendance officer beforehand.

The current school policy on taking holidays during term time is that parents write to the Headteacher to make a request for absence from school for a holiday in term time. If the Headteacher and Governors feels there are exceptional circumstances for a holiday during term time they have been given consent. Where the reason is not exceptional students have been marked Holiday unauthorised. **From the 1st January 2011 our Attendance Policy will be amended, the school will request that Fixed Penalty Notices are issued for term time holidays that are taken without consent.**

This brings us in to line with other schools in the area and follows the guidelines given to us by the government and Wakefield Local Authority that states that 'only in exceptional circumstances will leave be granted' for holidays in term time.

If a parent feels that there are exceptional circumstances for a holiday to be taken in term time, written requests must be made to the Headteacher. Please note that examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Cases where a parent can establish that no other holiday (of any type) could be taken at any other time
- There are genuine medical reasons for the dates
- There is a very strong case that the holiday is desirable on compassionate grounds.

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued per parent/carer per child by post to a pupil's home. Payment within 28 days of receipt of a Penalty Notice is £50 and if it remains unpaid after 28 days the amount will increase to £100. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 42 days, the case will progress to Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor school attendance; this can mean a fine of up to £2,500.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice, it is extremely important that you take action to secure regular attendance.

Support and guidance is always available from the School and the Education Welfare Service, therefore if you have any questions regarding Penalty Notices or any other attendance issue please do not hesitate to contact the School.

Yours faithfully

M Tarr  
Director of Student Service and Support

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