

Merton Junior School

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*'Be wise, together we
succeed'*

Monday 16th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may be aware, the Government have been updating their regulations and guidance in order to improve attendance in schools. In August 2024, new compulsory guidance around attendance was produced.

The Government make it clear that improving attendance is everyone's business. We know that the barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

Under the new national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. **Education law states that parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time.** Only in exceptional circumstances may a Headteacher grant permission for leave. Generally, the Department for Education (DfE) 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.

It is important to let you know that, for offences after the 19th August 2024, the following applies to all schools:-

- the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. This amount is per parent per child;**
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate;
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years;
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution).

If you have any questions about this then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Reading