



*Lawley Primary School*

*Discovery unites us!*

*Planting the seeds, growing the future*

30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Attendance Update**

You may or may not be aware that from August 19th, 2024, the Government introduced a new 'National Framework for Penalty Notices'. These now apply across Telford and Wrekin.

I wanted to resend this information out now that the changes have come into practice. Below are some of the significant changes you need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school-week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive. Unauthorised absences are recorded for children who are late after the register has closed, do not provide medical evidence or have not contacted school.
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160.
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, when a parent purposefully tries to avoid a Penalty Notice by taking their child out of school when there is only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD day or bank holiday attached to that week.
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.
- Absence for leave in term times will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances – please note that holidays or extended leave for family visits cannot be considered as exceptional circumstances. We will be updating our Attendance Policy to reflect this.

I totally understand the challenges of the costs of holidays during the school holidays and of having extended family who live abroad, however the guidance from the DfE is clear that we cannot authorise these absences. As a school we will always consider exceptional circumstances that sit outside these reasons on a case-by-case basis.

I also want to make you aware that there is a tightening of the guidelines around pupils arriving late. If pupils are consistently late this could contribute to their unauthorised absence levels and result in action being taken by the Local Authority. Our registers close at 8.55am and any pupils arriving after this time, but before 9.25am will be given a late mark. Any child/children arriving after 9.25am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Maintaining a good level of attendance is not only essential for your child's day to day learning but is also crucial in setting positive habits and mindsets for their future. If you need support with your child's attendance, please come and talk to a member of our attendance team.

Kind regards,

Mrs Carol McQuiggin

Headteacher