

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **Working Together to Further Improve School Attendance**

I hope this letter finds you well as we embark on another new academic year. We are excited to welcome back all our students and to set out on another year of learning and growth at The STAR Multi-Academy Trust.

As you know, excellent punctuality and regular attendance at school are crucial for your child's success. They are fundamental to their academic progress, social development, and overall wellbeing. With this in mind, I am writing to inform you of some important changes to attendance guidance, which are now in effect from September 2024.

The Department for Education have significantly toughened the law in relation to school attendance and have now published revised guidance which is mandatory from September 2024. Please ensure you read the following information and particularly review any holiday plans during term-time you may have as a family.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Parents must request permission in advance from school for leave of absence for any reason, including holidays. Headteachers cannot grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and cannot grant permission retrospectively. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not be an exceptional circumstance. The 'H' code (authorised holiday) will no longer exist in the new absence codes, to reflect the change in policy.

If you take your child out of school without permission this may lead to enforcement action (penalty notice or prosecution).

### **National Thresholds**

From September 2024, schools will need to consider a Penalty Notice if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Half of a day (am or pm) is considered as a 'session'. The threshold of 10 sessions can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, for example, eight sessions of unauthorised holidays in term time and two sessions for other unauthorised reasons. The ten school week period may span different terms or school years, for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 in the Autumn term.

### **Penalty Notices**

Under the new national framework, Fixed Penalty Notices will be considered when a child has missed ten or more sessions (five days) due to unauthorised absence in a period of ten school weeks.

In September 2024, Penalty Notices (fines) charged to parents will rise to £80 (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within between 22 and 28 days). Where a penalty notice is unpaid, legal action would be pursued.

Under the new framework, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period. Where a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child, the charge will be £160.

Contd.

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Paid within 21 days		
	Total for parent 1	Total for 2 parents
1 child	£80	£160
2 children	£160	£320
3 children	£240	£480

Paid within 28 days		
	Total for parent 1	Total for 2 parents
1 child	£160	£320
2 children	£320	£640
3 children	£480	£1440

If a third offence is committed within a three-year rolling period, legal action/prosecution would be considered.

### How We Can Team Up

School attendance is a high priority for everyone. The STAR Multi-Academy Trust, our schools and North Yorkshire Council (who have a statutory duty with regard student attendance) are committed to improving attendance and achievement and would like parents/carers to work with us to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. At STAR, we are passionate about our children's attendance and know that attending school is the most effective way to improve their life chances and future opportunities. We expect all children to attend school regularly and those families who struggle to send their child to school are fully supported.

- Attendance Goal: We're striving for a combined target of a minimum 98% attendance for each student. This has a proven impact on excellent student performance, outcomes and life chances. Of course we look at this individually for every student.
- Open Communication: If your child's attendance dips we will reach out to discuss potential support strategies.
- Managing Illness: For minor ailments, we encourage a "give it a go" approach, similar to workplace expectations. This builds resilience and reinforces the importance of routine.
- Sibling Absence: If one child is unwell, please send the others to school as usual.
- Appointments: Whenever possible, schedule appointments outside school hours. If necessary, try to book appointments that allow your child to attend part of the day.
- Term-Time Holidays: We encourage planning vacations during school breaks. This minimises disruption to learning. We support the new government guidance in relation to the non-authorisation of holidays during term time. Term time holiday requests will not be authorised unless very exceptional circumstances are met and reviewed by the Headteacher.

The full guidance from the DFE can be found online: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,

*Ian Yapp*

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