



St Michael & St John's RC Primary School
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Dear Parent/Guardian

ABSENCES AND LATENESS TO SCHOOL

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced **national changes** to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence and lateness in term time. Whilst these changes will come into effect on 19 August 2024, I am writing now to give you advance warning of these changes and to make you aware of what this will mean for us here at St Michael & St. John's RC Primary School:

- Penalty notices issued for unauthorised absences will be charged at a new rate of £160 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 will be issued is set at 10 'sessions'.
- Importantly and of real significance, this includes 'sessions' as a result of arriving late after the register closes in the morning or the afternoon.
- Please note, each school day is made up of two 'sessions'; one in the morning and one in the afternoon, so ten 'sessions' is classed as five days of absence and/or lateness within a rolling 10-school week period.
- Please also note that a school 'week' is determined as any week in which a school meets at least once in that week.
- The 10-school week period will also span different terms and school years.



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- Finally, a maximum of two penalty notices will be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the third (or subsequent) absence and/or lateness, another course of action will be used (such as prosecution).
- The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or irregular attendance, a penalty notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court. Magistrates fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. This is a criminal offence and parents may end up with a criminal record.

Therefore, we cannot stress enough the continued importance of not only attendance, but also arriving to school on time. Any absences for your son or daughter, whilst school is open as normal and all other pupils are in attendance, means gaps in their knowledge and learning can form in relation to their peers and could mean they will find it more difficult to catch up and meet their full potential.

Absences can and do have a lasting effect on learning. Missing a week of school for example means your child will miss 25 hours of learning. Whilst requests for absence can still be made using our appropriate form, it is only in the most exceptional of circumstances that any requested absence will be authorised. Holidays will continue not to be considered an exceptional circumstance.

Finally, can I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support in working alongside us here at St Michael and St John's in educating your children about the importance of regular attendance at school, and punctuality too. Thank you for your support in ensuring children are in school on time, in their lessons, learning alongside their peers. It continues to be very much appreciated. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours faithfully

Z Mabbott

Mrs. Z. Mabbott
Headteacher