

14<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

### **New National Framework for Penalty Notices for School Absence – From 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

I am taking this opportunity to write to inform you of some importance changes the Government and North Northamptonshire Council are introducing regarding school attendance and the issuing of penalty notices when children are absent from school.

A new national framework for penalty notices is being introduced. The regulations will come into effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 with the aim to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

#### **The national framework includes:**

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period.
- An increase to the rate of penalty notices from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days, and from £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. *NB: If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160.*
- A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period – so at the 3<sup>rd</sup> (or subsequent) offence(s), another tool must be considered – such as prosecution or other attendance legal interventions.

We currently await the revised local code of conduct provided by North Northamptonshire Council. Please do be aware that all fixed penalty notices are issued by the local authority, and the academy doesn't benefit financially from this action.

We will be amending our school's attendance policy in line of the updated guidance and will share this with you in September.

**We believe good attendance is essential to support your son/daughter to maximise their potential in school and we have therefore included some frequently asked questions overleaf to aid your understanding in this matter.**

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Taylor  
Senior Vice-Principal

### What does unauthorised absence mean?

If your child is absent from school – their attendance percentage will go down, even if the absence is authorised.

Unauthorised absence means that we do not agree your child needs to be at home. Power is given to schools to decide as to whether an absence should be allowed, and the code placed on the official register will reflect this decision.

### If I call to report my child absent, will it automatically be authorised?

No – schools will decide based upon the information available. Please remember to list explicitly your son/daughters' condition/symptoms and if you have sought medical advice.

School staff may call back and/or conduct a welfare visit if further information is required.

### How do I know if my child's absence will be authorised?

Whilst some absences are widely recognised as unauthorised (for example: staying home, visiting relatives, not returning following an appointment or a family holiday in term time), we do recognise that understanding if your son/daughter's absence will be authorised can be difficult to parents.

To afford mutual understanding, we use the NHS inform 'is my child too ill for school' when deciding about authorisation.

We recommend that parents/cares consult this document before deciding if their son/daughter can stay home.

Parents will be able to check their child's attendance records in the Arbor App in September.

### Does my child arriving late count?

All students should arrive at the academy on time. Registers remain open for the first 30 minutes of the school day. Anybody arriving after this time will be marked as absent for the morning session (code U), and this will count towards the total unauthorised absence within the 10 week period.

### Do family holidays count within this process?

Yes – please ensure we are notified of any leave in good time, in writing. On your return, we will share your application and any subsequent correspondence with the local authority who will issue a penalty notice if the threshold is met.

### Who can I speak to if I feel I need support with my child's attendance?

School staff are on hand to provide support if required. We appreciate parents efforts in encouraging your son/daughter to attend school every day and also recognise that, at times, it can be difficult.

Please contact us as soon as possible should the need arise:

Mrs V Mills – Attendance Improvement Manager. T: 01536 418844  
Mrs R Walker – Attendance Officer. T: 01536 418844