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Attendance/Request for absence

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we prepare to open school for all pupils in September, we would like to reiterate and make clear the procedures surrounding attendance and punctuality. Our policy was updated in February, so please ensure that you take note of the changes stated in this letter – there is a full copy of the attendance policy on our website. We would like to take this opportunity to remind all of our families that our policy is underpinned by a desire to ensure good attendance of our pupils but also to support families where necessary, especially in these difficult times. **Our school has been closed to all pupils for almost 4 months and so good attendance throughout the next academic year is vital, as we aim to teach areas of the curriculum that have been missed, as well as new in-year learning. It is also important for children to be back in school to allow for good social interaction with others and ensure that their well being is a top priority.**

Holidays and leave of absence during term time

After much analysis of our school data it is clear to see that holidays taken during term time are having the biggest impact on attendance. Therefore as a school we have decided to refer attendance concerns to City of York Council, where fines will be considered, if a leave of absence is refused by school. We may choose to consult with the Local Authority and ask that they consider what action they can take. I am aware that they could consider issuing you with a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act. Any parents issued with such a notice will be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 (if paid after the 21st day but within 28 days). Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution.

Out of term time holidays affected by Coronavirus

If you had previously arranged a holiday that was due to start and end during the school holidays, which has since been rearranged to take place in a time during the school term after September, we will not refer this leave of absence to the local authority. You will need to provide evidence that this holiday has been changed from a non-term time holiday to a term time holiday and that this is outside of your control. **If a holiday was previously due to take place during the school term and has again been rearranged to take place during the school term from September, this leave of absence will remain unauthorised and will result in a fine.**

Persistent absence

With regards to absence, we fully understand that illness and some medical appointments mean that pupils cannot attend school. However, we would like to encourage families, where possible, to avoid taking pupils out of school for dentist appointments and other reasons such as holidays. A pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10 per cent or more of their own possible sessions, rather than if they reach a standard threshold of absence sessions. As an example, in the Autumn term, there were 176 sessions for pupils to attend

(each session = half of a school day). If a pupil missed 18 sessions/half days (or 9 full days) they would be classified as a persistent absentee, as this would mean the attendance is at 90%.

Description of persistent absence measure	Academic years
10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions)	2015/16 onwards

This level of attendance has a detrimental impact of both learning and a pupil's social and emotional development. Teaching staff carefully map out learning so that the full curriculum is covered. As a result of persistent absenteeism, and whilst school staff will always try to support gaps in learning, pupils may miss key chunks of learning, and therefore move forward with gaps in their knowledge. Similarly, it is important that pupils attend regularly and on-time to ensure that they are able to form friendships and develop key social skills along the way.

Further changes to our attendance policy

Below is a graphic that explains our the Fast Track attendance procedure. To summarise, in September, the school will change the way in which we monitor and react to persistent absenteeism. This procedure, although broken into 7 stages, comprises of 3 main steps.

1. A letter is sent to parents to outline and highlight concerns.
2. If attendance is not improving at a satisfactory rate, parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting, where we will discuss ways in which attendance can be improved. Minutes will be taken during this meeting.
3. If attendance is still a cause for concern and improvements to attendance are not being made, consultation with the Local Authority will take place, as a result, a Penalty Notice could be issued.

