

Thursday 18th July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

IMPORTANT: School Attendance Penalty Notice Update!

For the 2024/25 Academic Year, starting in September, the Department for Education (DfE) has made changes to the attendance codes and guidance. We would like to inform families of this before the academic year starts.

Please note these are set by the Department for Education and are not St. Oswald's School policies. We are however asked to enforce these along with all other schools nationally.

The changes to be aware of are:

- The code for authorised holidays has been removed entirely and can no longer be used on registers.
- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a **new rate of £160 per parent per child**. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- 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 **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- **A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd offence another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).**

To put this into context, if a parent/carer takes a pupil out of school without authorised leave of absence in term time for 5 days or more from September 2024, then a family with two parents would receive a penalty of £320 per child. This is halved if paid within 21 days for the first instance.

Regarding late marks, **if a child arrives to school after the close of registers we are required by the Department for Education to give a U code** ('late after registers close'). If this were to be recorded 10 times within a 10-week period, the guidance would be a statutory fine of £160 per parent (halved if paid within 21 days for the first instance).

We appreciate that these guidelines are significantly more severe than those in the past. It is because of this we wanted to inform you before the new academic year starts. As always, we will do everything reasonably possible to work with families to ensure strong attendance and give the children in our school community the best possible life chances.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please do not hesitate to get in contact with our attendance team.

Kindest regards,
Mrs Carol Reece
Headteacher