

1 October 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

CHANGES TO ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 2015

As from 1st September 2015, the Department for Education has reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. Therefore, a student is now considered to have persistent absence if their attendance falls below 90%. In a half term, this can equate to as little as 3 days.

At St John Plessington, we have also amended our policy to reflect these changes. Subsequently, letters will be sent to parents once students have fallen below 91% attendance.

Wirral Borough Council have also recently carried out a review of the Penalty Notice code of conduct. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate when attendance of a student is below 90% with at least 10 days lost to unauthorised absence. These days now no longer need to be consecutive.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their children out of school during term time. The *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* do not allow Head Teachers to grant leave of absence to a student unless the Head Teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. This does not include holidays or weddings abroad, or taking students on holiday when a parent's work-based holidays fall. If a leave of absence is not authorised and is taken without permission, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice to *each parent*, requiring them to pay a fine for each child within 21 days.

From October 2015, we are requesting that should holidays be requested, the form on the website is filled in. This is also available from reception.

It is clear that regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and enable students to fulfil their potential. Consequently, schools are no longer judged on their overall attendance figures, but on the number of students who fall into the persistent absence category. The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment and highlights the fact that there will be an impact on your child's education and exam results if attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout his/her schooling. We aim, as always, to work with you to ensure that your child achieves in all areas.

Yours sincerely



Mr T P Quinn
Executive Head Teacher