



ANSTEY JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Headteacher

Mrs. Jenny Jones B.Sc (Hons), NPQH

5th September 2017

Dear Parents / Carers

Re: Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance at School

We write to remind you of the implementation of Hampshire County Council's revised School Attendance Code of Conduct and Legal Measures Guidance which was applied from September 2015. The Education Act of 1996 gives the Local Authority and headteachers the power to fine parents if a child fails to attend their registered school regularly. In the past there had been inconsistencies in the use of Penalty Notices in Hampshire schools so from September 2015 this changed. The aim of implementing the new Code of Conduct across all Hampshire, and therefore Alton Cluster schools, is to ensure good school attendance and consistency in the application of the legal measures to avoid discrepancies amongst families who may have children in more than one local school.

The fine, known legally as a Penalty Notice, may be issued where a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised half day sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within any 10 school week period; or 1 or more unauthorised absence/s during a public exam, assessment or test, where the dates have been published. This would be SATs week 14th May – 17th May 2018.

An absence is unauthorised when it is not approved by the school. We ask that you read the Hampshire County Council *Advice for Parents and Carers* leaflet, which accompanies this letter, for further details about the legal implications for parents and carers. Where absence warrants the issuing of a Penalty Notice, each individual parent/carer can be issued with one Penalty Notice for each of their children with unauthorised absence. A maximum of two fines can be issued per parent in any school year. Other legal sanctions will instead be considered if there is further unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices are posted to your home. Each Penalty Notice fine is £60 if paid within 21 days of the date of posting and £120 if paid after this but within 28 days of the date of posting. The penalty notice fine monies are used to recover legal and court costs if notices remain unpaid.

While headteachers are unable to authorise any leave during term time for the purpose of a holiday, leave for exceptional circumstances will be considered. Should you need to request a leave of absence for your child due to exceptional circumstances, please submit the official Hampshire *Request for Absence* form to your child's school. Copies of this form are available in school or can be downloaded at: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/application_form_to_request_absence.pdf.

All schools in the Alton Cluster aim to work with you as parents and carers to ensure that all pupils access their right to an education and therefore we would hope to avoid getting to the stage of a Penalty Notice through clear communication, a common sense approach and mutual support. The enclosed leaflet contains links for further support, advice and guidance on school attendance. If you have any other questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's school.

Yours faithfully

Jenny Jones
Headteacher

