

Henry Chadwick Community Primary School

School Lane, Hill Ridware, Rugeley WS15 3QN
Tel: 01543 490354

Headteacher
Mrs V Barnes

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30th September 2024

Dear all

As you are aware from my letter in July, there has been a significant tightening in the absences that Headteachers are able to authorise. I wanted to make these clear to all families prior to you booking holidays/events that may have been agreed previously. Where Headteachers were previously able to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances - this wording has changed to "highly exceptional circumstances" and the criteria is much stricter. Under the upgraded DFE guidance, we are duty bound to inform the Local Authority of any unauthorised absences and it is then their decision whether to issue a Penalty Notice (fine) or to prosecute.

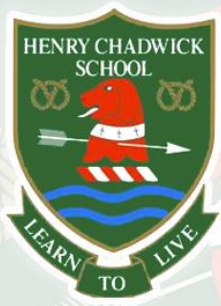
Changes that may be significant to you:

- Authorised holidays for children with Special Educational Needs can no longer be granted. The reasoning behind this is that there are a variety of reasonable adjustments made to support the needs of SEND children that allows them to access locations/events during school holidays.
- We can no longer authorise requests for absences due to weddings, even if the child concerned is directly involved. This is because these are planned and can be booked in school holiday time.
- Travel to/from a weekend event (like a wedding) on a Friday or Monday.
- We are also required to submit to the Local Authority if a holiday is suspected and evidence to prove the contrary has not been provided
- It is only in **highly exceptional** circumstances that any leave can be granted.
- Notifications of sick absences leading into/or after a weekend or school holiday will be queried, as well as illnesses lasting more than a few days.

I also wanted to clarify the changes to the issuing of penalty notices. These will be over a three-year period; the three years being triggered from the onset of the first absence. They are also transferrable between schools, even across counties.

- 1st absence - £160 fine per parent, per child (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days) - this includes a parent and step parent living together even if the step parent does not have parental responsibility. If parents are separated, the penalty notice will not be issued to the parent that has not requested the leave of absence.

Every day counts..... Every minute matters.....



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- 2nd Absence - £160 fine per parent, per child (with no early payment reduction) - this includes a parent and step parent living together even if they do not have parental responsibility. If parents are separated, the penalty notice will not be issued to the parent that has not requested the leave of absence.
- 3rd/subsequent absences will trigger court action with fine up to £1000.

I hope that this clarifies the position. I did not want parents to book holidays or events that had previously been agreed to then find that they were not agreed and Penalty Notices are issued.

With Regards,
Vicki Barnes

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