



9th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Further to correspondence back in July regarding unauthorised absences leading to a fine after 9 such absences (ie 9 half day sessions), I would like to remind you about that process. This is now a standard communication from all schools to parents.

Here at Otterham Primary School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed in exceptional circumstances.

However, the Government does not support parents taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under 'exceptional circumstances'. Any request for leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's request form.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. Otterham Primary School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Ward
Head Teacher