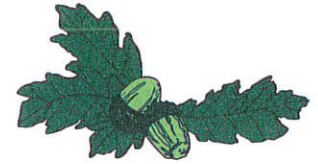


# Meadow Vale Primary School

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Success for All

December 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

## RE: SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS – FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

I am writing to advise all parents and carers that Bracknell Forest Council will be continuing the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences from school.

There is much research which demonstrates the links between regular attendance at school and academic achievement – the more a pupil attends the more they can achieve. If your child has two weeks off or odd days absence from school over a sustained period of time those days cannot be recovered, the learning is missed and your child will be in danger of falling behind.

Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, will consider the issue of a Penalty Notice using the following criteria:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months
- Other than in specific circumstances<sup>1</sup>, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year<sup>2</sup>.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- issue a Penalty Notice without warning<sup>3</sup>

Currently the tariff for the Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt. If the Penalty Notice is not paid at the end of the 28 day period then Bracknell Forest Council may proceed to prosecution for the offence.

Parents/carers should not expect a school to agree to a family holiday during term time. Parents/carers **do not** have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday at times when they should be attending school. Schools will normally refuse to authorise holidays during term time and the Local Authority will support them in doing so.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Parsons  
Headteacher

<sup>1</sup>The deliberate taking of holiday in term time without/against school permission where it can clearly be demonstrated that the parent understood that permission would not have been granted and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions in the current term.

<sup>2</sup>In circumstances where the criteria for issuing a Penalty Notice are met more frequently a prosecution will be appropriate.

<sup>3</sup>Exceptional circumstances will include:

- if there have been previous attendance concerns
- if the pupil is already on open referral to Education Welfare and has time off for unauthorised term-time holiday
- if there is a second unauthorised holiday absence within a 6 month period
- any holiday absence within the first three weeks of the academic year
- any holiday absence by a pupil who should be sitting public exams during the public examination period.

