Manchester Road Primary Academy



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Dear Parents/Carers, 11.12.17

As we approach the end of the first term, we are looking at our attendance figures and working hard with families who have children in school who have attendance less than 90%.

90% at this time of year means that the children have missed 6 days of school (equivalent to a day every other week).

Currently there are 70 children who meet this threshold – which is a worrying figure. Our percentage of persistent absence is 15.2% compared to the national of 8%.

Although children are absent for different reasons, holidays are still a major factor in our reduced attendance rates – and in particular persistent absence. If a child is on holiday for 5 days, this affects their attendance for at least 14 weeks, and if they are then also ill, this makes it even harder to raise attendance over 95%.

Already this term, we have lost over 250 days of learning in children taking holidays in term time.

The government have made clear that they expect children to be in school as regularly as possible, and as such, they introduced a penalty notice system which can be used by local authorities to fine parents for taking children on holiday in term time.

Currently, the fines are £60 per child per parent (if paid within 14days).

There has been a change now to this system, which I am writing to inform all parents of as I feel it important that everyone understands the changes for future reference.

If a child is on holiday, and a fine is paid this is done instead of a court appearance. The idea behind this is that parents will not repeat the offence, and the fine acts as a deterrent.

Tameside council have now issued a template letter to all Tameside schools to make it clear that if 2 or more fines are paid, and then a child is absent again due to holiday at any time in the future, that it could automatically trigger a court appearance. Details of the consequences of this could be a £2500 fine or a custodial sentence. The purpose behind this is to make it clear to families who persistently take holidays each year and accept that they will be fined, are deterred further by a more serious approach.

Our sole aim here is to ensure the highest possible attendance from the children at Manchester Road so that children are able to access the highest amount of learning and achievement - and we know that the vast majority of parents strive to ensure their children are in school every day and on time.

If anyone has any questions regarding this, or if anyone would like a copy of the letter, please contact Mrs Woods or Myself at school.

Thank You,

Joanne Taylor

Principal MRPA