



Durweston CE VA Primary School

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'Stand true in what you believe. Be courageous, be strong. And do everything with love.' 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

November 2019

Dear Parents,

Please see below the latest guidance on absence and penalty notices that we have received from Dorset County Council.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be used

Penalty Notices can only be issued in cases where a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent and the absence has not been authorised by the school or where the pupil has persistently arrived late after the register has closed. The level of absence that is necessary before a Penalty Notice can be issued is **10 or more half days of unauthorised absence within a 12 school week period.**

Unauthorised Leave in Term Time

In accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended a Penalty Notice can be issued in exceptional circumstances, for example where a parent takes a child on holiday during term time without the school authorising the absence. In such circumstances, although **a minimum of 10 half day sessions of unauthorised absence** will still apply before a Penalty Notice may be issued, the authorised person may issue a Penalty Notice without first issuing a formal warning to the parent as would otherwise be required. However s/he should still be satisfied that the parent was informed beforehand that, in some exceptional circumstances e.g. term time holiday, unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued without further warning.

I know that this is a contentious issue and that there are many opinions as to the various rights and wrongs of the legislation, which I am happy to discuss. However, the government's aim is to ensure that every child's attendance is at least 96% and we have to comply with the actions necessary to achieve that. Therefore, we will be sending **termly letters** to parents whose children's attendance falls below 96% and, as has been agreed with the other schools in the area, we will be issuing penalty notices to families who meet the above criteria.

Please remember that it is Durweston policy NOT to approve any holidays in term time. I hope this is of help.

Best wishes,

Nicola Brooke

