



**Thorntree Primary School
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Head Teacher: Mrs W. Nelson**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Amendments to School Attendance Regulations

You may be aware from the news or other media that from 1st September 2013 the Government made changes to the legislation regarding school attendance.

Under new regulations, Schools and Academies are **no longer allowed to authorise leave of absence for family holidays**. From September 2013, Head teachers and Principals will not grant any leave of absence for students during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We hope you will find the information below useful in answering any questions you have:

1. What are 'Exceptional Circumstances'?

Examples include families of service children where a parent's annual leave is set and determined by their regiment. It is expected that service families submit a covering letter on official letterhead from their regiment confirming this. Another example is where a parent's annual leave may be set and be non-negotiable by the company/service they work for. It will be expected that a confirmation of this is provided on company letterhead and signed by the management.

2. I still intend to take my child on a holiday which will not qualify as exceptional circumstances, what happens then?

All parents must complete the new form which notified the school of a child's planned absence. Where this leave has not been authorised, each day of absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. A Penalty Notice will be issued if the holiday is then taken.

3. What are Penalty Notice fines and who will issue them?

The Local Authority will decide to issue Penalty Notice fines to parents. Currently the amounts are £60 per child for each parent where the fine is paid within 21 days, and £120 per child for each parent where the fine is paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. Parents should be aware that this means a family of 2 parents and 2 children will be fined £240 if the fine is paid within 21 days or £480 if the fine is paid from 21-28 days. For families with 3 children, these amounts would be £360/£720.

4. Are there any other instances where families may be issued with a Penalty Notice fine?

Children who have '**unauthorised absence**' marks in the register will be subject to the same procedure. The Local Authority will decide whether to issue a Penalty Notice fine to each family. Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- . Arrival in school after 8.50 a.m. when the registers have closed and the child was not attending a medical appointment.
- . No reason given to school for child's non-attendance.
- . Persistent poor attendance.
- . Reason for absence not valid or able to be approved.
- . Families who have previously been informed that the school cannot authorise any further absences without medical evidence.

5. What is the procedure?

Families intending to take their children out of school must complete a new notification form. This ensures we know the whereabouts of all our children who are missing from education. At the same time, families are asked to give details if they feel their request counts as '**exceptional circumstances**'. The school will acknowledge each form submitted and inform parents as to whether the absence will be recorded as 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Families, where lateness, unauthorised absences or persistent poor attendance is an issue will be notified by letter or telephone by Josie Andrew, Education Welfare Officer.

6. Where can I find the new notification form?

Parents can pick up a form in the school office or download one from the school website at www.thorntreeschool.co.uk

7. I have read the information and still have a query?

Please make an appointment to speak to Josie Andrew, Education Welfare Officer at school if you would like further clarification on the above. Mrs Andrews is available in school each Tuesday morning.

Yours sincerely

W.Nelson
Head Teacher

Josie Andrew
Education Welfare Officer
Education Welfare Ltd



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