



Hinchingsbrooke School

Inspiring excellence Fulfilling potential

A DfE Academy with a Specialism in Sport

20 December 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Unauthorised absence from school

Attendance has the single most influential impact on a student's achievement, and as a school we all work together to ensure that our students achieve their maximum academic potential. You will already be aware that legislation has given principals/head teachers (as well as police officers and education welfare officers) the power to serve Penalty Notices on parents who permit their children to truant, arrive persistently late or take their children out of school without the school's prior authorisation. I do of course appreciate the fact that the vast majority of our parents fully support their children's regular and punctual attendance at school but I am writing in order to ensure that this discretionary power is properly explained to all parents so that any unnecessary misunderstandings can be avoided.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Should a parent on whom a notice is served fail to pay the full amount of the fine within the specified time, he/she will be liable to prosecution in a magistrates' court where on conviction a sentence of a fine of up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed. Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the terms of the County Council's local Code of Conduct, a copy of which is retained by the school.

In making any future decision as to whether it is appropriate for the school to utilise this discretionary power I will consult with the education welfare officer and will consider the seriousness of an individual child's non-attendance and the response of his/her parent.

If you believe that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the need to take your child out of school during term time, parent/carers must complete the leave of absence request form that is available on the school website (copy attached). This should be returned to the relevant Head of School, providing at least 10 days' school notice, where circumstances allow.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation of the efforts of the vast majority of our parents who successfully ensure their children's regular and punctual attendance.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Goulding
Principal

Enc