



# Ryecroft C.E. (C) Middle School

Denstone Road, Rocester, Staffordshire, ST14 5JR  
Telephone: 01889 590394 Fax: 01889 591483  
Headteacher: Mr S Bardon B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

October 2015

Dear Parent / Carer

## **Penalty Notices for Absences from School – Updated School Attendance Policy**

I wish to inform you that the school *Attendance Policy* has recently been updated. A copy of the policy can be found under 'documents' on our school website [www.ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk). I would also like to take this opportunity in reminding parents of our Local Authority's stance with regard to leave of absence during term time and penalty notices for absences from school.

The opportunity for your child to have access to a good education is very important to us all. Encouraging good attendance gives each pupil the best chance to learn and achieve to their full potential.

The vast majority of pupils at Ryecroft and in Staffordshire achieve very good attendance, and the number of unauthorised absences (without permission agreed by the school) is lower in Staffordshire than compared to the national average. Therefore, good attendance is not a problem in most cases.

Headteachers continue to hold the responsibility for deciding if a request made by a parent or carer for leave of absence should be granted, to give permission for "authorised" absence in exceptional circumstances.

Last year the Department for Education (DfE) introduced changes to the law regarding parents taking their children out of school during term time. These changes meant that parents risk receiving a penalty notice (fine) issued by the Local Authority for taking their child out of school in term time without permission from the head teacher.

Since these these changes came into effect, the Local Authority has consulted with schools and reviewed the county's criteria for issuing penalty notices, for those pupils who miss out on school without permission, and where the Local Authority is, therefore, required by law to take appropriate action.

This has resulted in some changes which came into effect earlier this year and for your information are outlined below.

### **Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time**

- Previously the approach was to only issue a Penalty Notice if the pupil's overall attendance was below 87%. This threshold has now been removed.
- Previously only one Penalty Notice per pupil was issued within an academic year. This limit has been removed so more than one Penalty Notice could be issued for repeated absence without permission during term time.
- Previously pupils missing 10 sessions or five days taken together risked a Penalty Notice. Now a combined total of ten sessions (not necessarily grouped as 5 consecutive days) could trigger a Penalty Notice.
- Instead of monitoring and totaling holiday absences taken across each academic year, they will now be monitored across the previous three terms, regardless of academic year.

Cont.....

## Penalty Notice for persistent absence

- Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

These changes have been implemented to support good attendance. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home>

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support headteachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents that choose to disregard the law.

In contrast, I would like to offer my congratulations to the vast majority of pupils who have an excellent record of attendance, and recognise that so many of our parents are very careful not to book holidays during term-time, despite the challenges this can sometimes present.

Yours sincerely



**Mr S Bardon**  
**Headteacher**

Email: [headteacher@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk)

[office@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk)

Website: [www.ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk)

