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12th September 2024

Dear Florendine Community,
We would like to update you about some changes to our school attendance policy. (Please see our school website)

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Our Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore, students at Florendine will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

At Florendine we know how important it is for children to be in school, ready to learn. We want to work together to ensure that all children are attending school and that children whose attendance could be improved are given the support that they need to do so.

The following percentages are used to classify pupil attendance:

98%+ Outstanding, **95% - 97%** Good, **90 – 94%** Poor, **Below 90%** Unsatisfactory – officially 'persistently absent'.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks' absent	which means this many lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	40 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	80 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	120 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	160 lessons

I can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the DfE's 2024 school attendance regulations.
These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at my discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Exceptional circumstances are one-off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Therefore, any leave taken for the purpose of a holiday is unlikely to be regarded as an exceptional circumstance.

Examples of exceptional circumstance may include occasions such as:

- When a family experiences an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling

- Transport was not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment
- A wedding of an immediate family member (an invitation could be provided/requested as evidence).
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions
- A day of absence may be agreed for immediate family member graduation ceremony/passing out parade.
- Operations which require recovery time.
- Religious observance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office via the following: Tel: 01827 429011, Email: office@florendine.staffs.sch.uk

Where absence becomes persistent, we will put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with external school partners.

Where there is a lack of engagement, we will hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention or penalty notices in future.

Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, we will work with the local authority to implement legal intervention.

The school may recommend to the local authority that a penalty notice is required. However, the local authority may reach this decision independently of the school.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

Following the second offence every new offence within the 3-year period will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. The maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

We want to work together to achieve the best outcomes with the best attendance for all of our children. If you have any questions or would like advice or support with regards to attendance, please get in touch with us.

Yours Sincerely,



Headteacher