



## Nyewood CE Infant School

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**“SMILING, CARING AND LEARNING TOGETHER ON A JOURNEY WITH GOD”**

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4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

### **NEW Attendance Rules from the Department for Education that Parents Need to Know**

As you may be aware, the Department for Education have issued new attendance guidance for schools which is to be implemented immediately. We believe we offer a supportive approach to attendance and encourage our families to contact us should there be any barriers to your child arriving at school on time every day. Attendance at school is very important and long periods of absence from school is known to negatively affect children's learning development and well-being. In preparation for the new guidelines around attendance, please ensure you have read the following information carefully.

This new guidance has been issued because, prior to Covid, school absence had been on the decline, but since the pandemic, it appears attitudes towards attendance have changed and schools nationally are seeing a steep increase in children being absent from school. The Government want to improve attendance figures in schools and Ministers have now published new guidance on managing school attendance that is now mandatory (required by law). As part of the locality group of schools' attendance agreement, we are obliged to put these new rules in place.

Here's what you need to know:

#### **National fine thresholds**

From September, schools will still have to consider a fine if a pupil misses 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The threshold can be met with "any combination of unauthorised absence". For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late after the register has closed.

#### **£80 fines and Improvement Notices**

The DfE ruling has announced that the absence fines (Fixed Penalty Notices) charged to parents have now risen from £60 to £80, or £160 if not paid within 21 days. From now on, **only two fines can be issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period.** Any absence fine thereafter will automatically be charged at £160 (with

no option to pay the reduced amount). Parents will also receive "improvement notices", where they are informed that this is their last opportunity to engage with education and improve their child's attendance before a fine is issued.

The Government has also stated that FPNs can be issued for **less** than the 10-session unauthorised threshold should circumstances arise. For example, where a school knows that a parent is taking steps to avoid the use of an FPN by taking their child out of school for 9 sessions to go on holiday or similar. FPNs can be issued also where schools know that families are being untruthful about their child's absence.

### **Long-Term Sickness to be Flagged with Local Authorities**

From the Autumn, schools will have to give the Local Authority the name and address of any long-term sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days. Schools will also be expected to inform a pupil's social worker (where applicable) if there are unexplained absences from school.

### **Mental Health Awareness**

All schools should now be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

School attendance is monitored by the Governing body, the Local Authority, the DfE and Ofsted and so schools have to follow the strict guidance. When referrals are made to the Local Authority, and an FPN is issued, the school does **not** receive any of the FPN payment. The final decision of whether to fine or not is with the Local Authority.

I hope this is helpful and explains some of the changes.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Miller  
Headteacher