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Date: 30th April 2013

Dear Parents/Carers

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Government has implemented new legislation effective from 1st September 2013 which means that no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

When a parent/carer wishes to apply to take their child out of school during term time they must complete a leave of absence form and this should be submitted to the school at least 4 weeks before the proposed start of the holiday and before booking the holiday.

The Local Authority will be issuing guidance to all schools on the definition of an exceptional circumstance. Where a head teacher feels that there may be an exceptional circumstance which does not fit the specified criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice.

If you take your child on holiday during term time, without the authorisation of the Head Teacher, the Head Teacher will make a request to the Local Authority to issue a **Fixed Penalty Notice**. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child, per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days, after 28 days it will increase to £120. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that the parent/carer has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Please note that a separate Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent for each child and all monies are payable to the Local Authority

Please find enclosed the Local Authority leaflet '*Information to Parents About Fixed Penalty Notices*' explaining this further, which you should read.

We look forward to your support in this drive to improve school attendance and encourage our young people to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Yours sincerely



Anita Linsdell
Service Manager - Attendance and Pupil Welfare



Information for Parents about Fixed Penalty Notices

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti-Social Behavioural Act 2003 introduced Legislation that made provision for a Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. These notices require a fine to be paid by Parents of Pupils who have unauthorised absence from School during term-time.

In what circumstances will Fixed Penalty Notices be issued?

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued in three situations:-

1. If a Holiday or other leave of absence is taken during term-time without the authorisation of the Headteacher.
2. If a Pupil has unauthorised absence from School and this does not improve following an FPN warning letter.
3. If a child is found on a Truancy Patrol twice during a four month period. A separate Penalty Notice will be issued to EACH Parent for EACH child who has unauthorised absence.

What are the Penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is **£60** when the payment is made within **21 days**. If payment is made after **21 days** but within **28 days** will increase to **£120**. Failure to pay within **28 days** will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at School.

Why has the Government introduced this Legislation?

The message of this new legislation is that it is really very important that every child attends school for as many of the 380 half day sessions of the school year as possible. It is the responsibility of Parents to ensure that their Children do not take unnecessary time off school.

What must I do if my child is not attending School?

If you are having difficulties in ensuring your Child attends School regularly, you should contact the School in the first instance. If you receive a warning letter from Doncaster Council about your Child's attendance you should get in touch with the Education Welfare Officer, as soon as possible, to discuss the reason for your Child's absence from School.

You should avoid taking your Child out of School for a holiday unless there are exceptional circumstances as you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Education Welfare Officers support Schools, Parents and Pupils so that high levels of attendance can be achieved. In the first instance you should contact your Child's School who will offer advice and support. If problems persist you can seek advice from an Education Welfare Officer on 736504.

Every school in Doncaster is supporting the message that School attendance is a high priority. We hope that Parents will help us to ensure that all Doncaster Children achieve the very highest levels of attendance at School.