

# High Firs Primary School

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Dear Parents,

## **Periods of unauthorised absence (including term-time holidays) and use of Penalty Notices.**

The Governing body and staff at High Firs all want our pupils to get the most out of their education and we know you will appreciate the role that your child's attendance plays in this. Pupils' absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning; not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for lessons after their return. There can be a significantly negative impact on your child's progress and the absence can create the risk of poor results for your child. There is considerable evidence to demonstrate a clear link between attendance and results and the subsequent impact on children's future life chances. We are proud of the very good attendance of most of our pupils and we want to continue to promote this.

The school uses the Kent PRU and Attendance Service for reporting absent children. This service helps the school to support families where children have a problem attending school, whatever the reason may be; this may include liaison with the KPAS Attendance Officer.

The Kent PRU and Attendance Service is able to action Penalty Notices to be served on parents **where a child has 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absence (for whatever reason) during a rolling 10 school week period.** The unauthorised term time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a penalty notice.

Only two Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three year rolling period, and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those three years, and KCC will take alternative action instead which may include prosecution in the Magistrates Courts under section 444 of the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority. Any money secured via the serving of penalty notices does NOT go to the school; this is retained by Kent County Council.

All requests for leave of absence will be considered individually by the Headteacher but will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances. If a leave of absence is taken without the school's permission, or the child fails to return on the agreed date, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a penalty notice can be issued. Please therefore do consider very carefully before booking or requesting holiday absence in term-time.

We do appreciate that the large majority of our parents fully and actively adhere to our attendance policy and would like to thank you for your support with this. We hope that with these measures to facilitate good attendance that our children's attendance rate, and subsequently their learning, will continue to flourish.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Kilbride  
Headteacher