



Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.
Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8

Dear Parent/Carer,

Penalty notice fines for unauthorised absence from school

Improving attendance is everyone's business. At The Federation of Middleham and Spennithorne CE Primary Schools we recognise the support we receive from parents and carers in order to remove any barriers to attendance so that all pupils can succeed.

We have seen a huge improvement in the last year, our federation attendance remains above average and the number of persistent absentees has decreased, so thank you for your support in this matter.

We are contacting you because there have been some changes nationally that we need to make you aware of. Some of you may have seen these on social media and news reports recently.

The government recently passed legislation to introduce changes to how local authorities issue penalty notices (fines) to parents/carers in regard to a child's unauthorised absence from school. In summary, the cost of a fine will increase and there will be additional penalties for repeat offences within a three year period.

The table below outlines the Government's changes.

National framework for penalty notices - applies from 19th August 2024

First penalty notice	£160 - reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (per parent per child)
Second penalty notice	Issued to the same parent in respect of same pupil £160 payable within 28 days
Third penalty notice	Cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period. If the national threshold is met for a third time within this period alternative action should be taken. This will often include considering prosecution.

As you know, leave of absence can only be granted by the headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Therefore, it is really important that you understand the changes above if leave of absence is not granted.

If you want to take your child out of school during term time you must make a request to the headteacher in advance. We request 20 school days' notice of leave where possible, to consider any exceptional circumstance. A copy of the leave of absence request form is available on our website <https://fed-mas.n-yorks.sch.uk/attendance/> or from either school office.

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. If you are aware of any issues impacting on your child's attendance, please contact the school to discuss.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marie Mann
Executive Headteacher