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**Joint message from Mrs Dyer and Mrs Short**

**Important Changes to the Law regarding Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School.**

Dear Parents/Carers,

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. These new Government regulations will come into effect from 19 August 2024, and we wanted to bring this to your attention now, as it is likely to affect when penalty notices are issued in Hertfordshire.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.
3. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

Hertfordshire is currently consulting on what these changes will mean for the authority and we will keep you updated of any additional information as we receive it.

We would like to extend our thanks to all our families for their support in making sure that children do not miss any valuable learning time.

Best wishes,

*Sue Dyer and Sally Short*