



Our Time to Shine

Tudhoe Colliery Primary School
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Important Message Regarding Unauthorised Absence - September 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please note that from September 3rd 2019, we will be reporting unauthorised absence to the Local Authority (LA) who may issue a penalty notice, which will then result in a fine.

We have taken this decision because our school never reaches its target of over 97% attendance, because of the disproportionately high number of holiday requests that school receives. As a school we decided that we would not authorise holidays last year at all - as a result our unauthorised absence was 1.11%. Without those holidays during term time, our attendance figures would have been 97.6%!

Ofsted states that schools must do everything they can to ensure... 'Pupils have high attendance, come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action.' Page 57 - Ofsted Handbook 2019.

We have resisted the need to fine parents for a long time now, however Governors have voted unanimously for our school to report unauthorised absence to the LA, in order for them 'to issue penalty notices to parents or carers for their child's non-attendance at school.'

I have attached the LA Factsheet and Essential Information leaflets which will apply to all pupils from the term after they are 5 years old. The main message is 'If your child has accrued **7 days or more** of unauthorised absence in a minimum 12 rolling school week period, you could receive:

- **A warning** - requiring you to ensure no further unauthorised absences occur in a 15 day monitoring period, otherwise you would receive a fine.
- **A fixed penalty notice** - the warning period does not apply to notices issued due to leave of absence in term time taken without permission, or other parentally condoned absence.' (Durham CC Factsheet 2016)

If the LA issue penalty notices, it is the LA that receives the fines, not the school. If you would like any further clarification on this matter, please give me a call.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Smith

