

Barnes Farm Junior School

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Dear Parent/Carers

Re: Forthcoming changes to Essex Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for unauthorised leave of absence

In line with government guidelines, Essex County Council has carried out its annual review of the penalty notice code of conduct and I write to notify you of the significant change that has been agreed as a result of this year's review.

As from 1st September 2015, all penalty notices will be issued on the basis of 10 unauthorised absences within a six week period. This will include absences that are taken where a family chooses to go on holiday or take unauthorised leave for 5 or more days (10 or more sessions).

Whilst the new code will take effect from 1st September 2015, please note that any holiday which is applied for after the 30th June 2015, where the leave is to be taken after the 1st September 2015, will be subject to the revised Essex Code of Conduct which will be made available on the Essex County Council website at the end of June 2015.

I would like to remind you that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 does not allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence to a pupil unless the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

If a holiday is not authorised, and is taken without permission, the Education Welfare Service may issue a penalty notice to each parent, requiring them to pay a fine of £60 for each child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £120. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Education Welfare Service will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

I hope that, by making you aware of the forthcoming changes, you will be in a position to avoid booking leave which could place you at risk of receiving a penalty notice.

Yours sincerely,

Mr R McTaggart
Head teacher