West Moors Middle School
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Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to begin by thanking you for your continued support in ensuring that your children attend school every day and arrive on time. Working together, we can give every child the very best opportunity to succeed, both academically and personally.

As we begin a new school year, I would like to take the opportunity to explain why good attendance is so important and to remind families of the current regulations regarding absence during term time.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular attendance is one of the most significant factors in a child's educational success. Being in school every day helps children build confidence, develop friendships, engage fully in learning and make the progress of which they are capable.

Schools have a legal duty to monitor attendance. Attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absences, lateness and term-time holidays, is regularly monitored by both the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

The Government expects schools to work towards at least **95% attendance** for all pupils across the academic year. Pupils whose attendance falls below **90%** are classed as **persistent absentees**.

Although 90% attendance may appear to be a strong figure, it actually equates to approximately **19 days of missed learning** across a school year. Missed lessons can quickly have an impact on children's learning, confidence and sense of belonging within school.

Our aim is for every pupil to achieve at least **95% attendance**, enabling them to benefit from every opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Supporting Attendance

We are committed to providing the best possible support for children and families and therefore continue to work in partnership with Inclusive Attendance.

Together, we aim to help children attend school regularly and overcome any barriers they may face. Our approach focuses on creating a shared understanding between school staff, families and pupils about the importance of attendance and the role we all play in supporting it.

We have followed this approach throughout the past academic year and were delighted to receive the **Inclusive Attendance Bronze Award** in February. This achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of our staff, pupils and families in promoting and improving attendance across the school.

Term-Time Absence and Holidays

We understand that families may occasionally need to request time away from school during term time. However, it is important that parents and carers are aware that family holidays and leisure trips taken during term time cannot be authorised. Under the 2024 School Attendance Regulations, the Headteacher may only grant leave of absence during term time in specific circumstances, including:

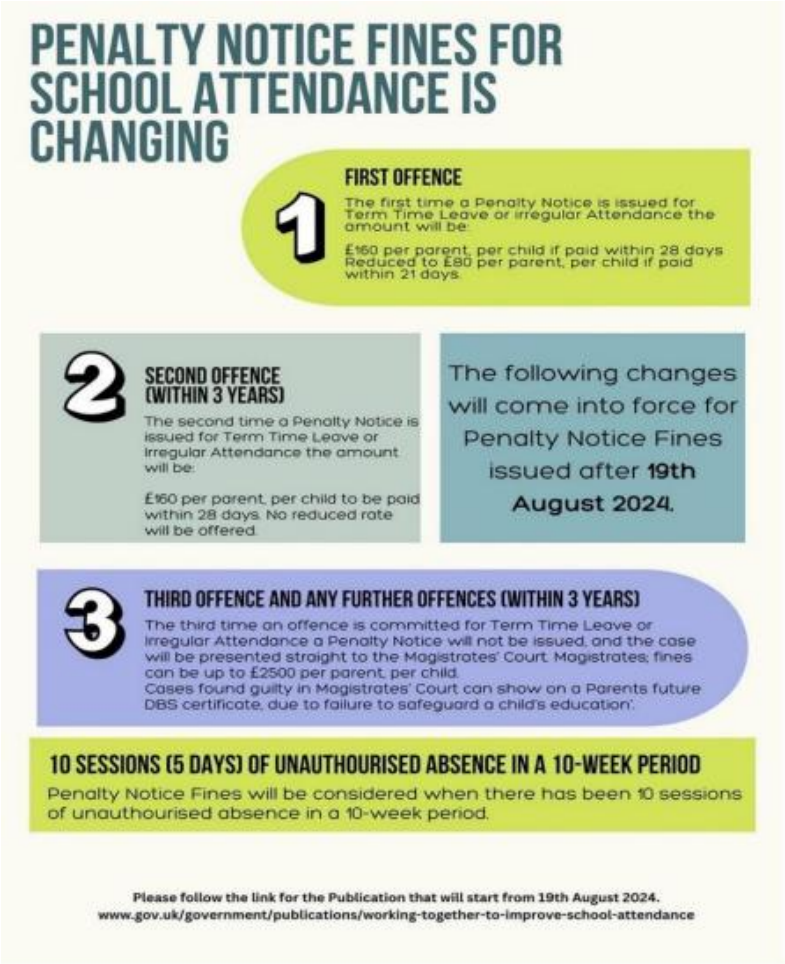
- Taking part in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

Each request is considered individually, taking into account the circumstances of the request, the reason for the absence and the length of time requested.

Please note that family holidays, including those arranged because travel is less expensive during term time or to accommodate family commitments, are not considered exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

Wherever possible, requests for a leave of absence should be submitted in advance using the school's Term-Time Absence Request Form, which is available on our website. Please note that all requests must be made using this form, as we are unable to process requests made via email, telephone or other methods.

Holiday Penalty Notices



The attendance regulations also include provisions relating to Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences, including unauthorised holidays taken during term time.

Penalty Notice fines have increased and are now tracked over a rolling three-year period. Further information can be found in the accompanying infographic.

A Penalty Notice may be considered where there are five or more days of unauthorised absence within a ten-week period. Please note that Penalty Notices for poor attendance and term-time leave are issued at the discretion of the Local Authority. Schools are legally required to share attendance information with the Local Authority where appropriate.

Further details regarding attendance procedures and expectations can be found in our Attendance Policy, available on the school website. We encourage all parents and carers to read this document carefully.

If Your Child Is Struggling to Attend School

We recognise that some children can find attending school challenging for a variety of reasons. Please be assured that we have a strong pastoral team and a dedicated Attendance Officer who are available to support both children and families.

If your child is experiencing difficulties with attendance, we encourage you to contact us as soon as possible. We are here to listen, offer support and work alongside you to identify and overcome any barriers your child may be facing.

We also understand that there are times when children are genuinely unwell and unable to attend school. The NHS provides helpful guidance to support parents and carers in deciding whether a child is well enough to attend school:

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/

If your child is absent due to illness, please notify the school **by 8:00am each day of absence**.

To help us accurately record and authorise absences, please provide specific details about your child's illness rather than simply stating that they are "unwell". If we require further information, a member of staff may contact you.

You will also receive a notification if your child arrives late to school. May I take this opportunity to remind families that the school gates **close promptly at 8:30am**. After this time, children should enter through the school office.

Thank You

Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership. By working together, we can ensure that every child attends school regularly, arrives on time and makes the most of every opportunity available to them.

I look forward to working with you throughout the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Craddock
Headteacher