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Our Ref:

Your Ref:

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Dear Parent /Carer

### **Changes to the issuing of Penalty Notices for absences from School**

The vast majority of our pupils in Sefton achieve very good attendance, and the number of unauthorised absences (absence without permission agreed by the school) is reducing. In 2014 we have seen an improving picture on the number of persistent absences (children who repeatedly miss sessions).

If a parental request is received asking for leave of absence, it continues to be the Headteacher's decision as to whether this request is granted and to give permission for "authorised" absence in exceptional circumstances.

In September 2013, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced changes to the law regarding parents taking their children out of school during term time. These changes meant that parents risk receiving a penalty notice (fine) issued by the Local Authority for taking their child out of school in term time without permission from the Headteacher.

Two years on from these changes, the Local Authority has consulted with schools and reviewed the Council's criteria for issuing penalty notices, for those pupils who miss out on school without permission, and where the Local Authority is, therefore, required by law to take appropriate action.

This has resulted in some changes, which are outlined below and which come into effect from 1st September 2015.

A minimum evidential requirement of ten (10) school sessions lost to unauthorised absence by any pupil in the current term and/or eighteen (18) sessions lost to unauthorised absence over two consecutive terms will be required to trigger the process.

These changes have been agreed with Headteachers and have been implemented to support good attendance. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the Sefton Council's website

[http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/237267/penalty\\_charge\\_notice\\_code\\_of\\_conduct\\_-sep\\_2015.doc](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/237267/penalty_charge_notice_code_of_conduct_-sep_2015.doc)

The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support Headteachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents that choose to disregard the law.

Yours Sincerely



Mike McSorley  
Head of Schools and Families