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Wednesday, 3rd September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Re: The Importance of School Attendance**

At Seaburn Dene, we are committed to ensuring that every child achieves their full potential. Regular school attendance is vital — every day of learning counts towards your child's progress, achievement, and confidence.

### **Holiday Leave During Term Time**

Head Teachers no longer have the discretionary authority to approve holiday leave during term time. This practice changed in September 2013. Only *extreme circumstances* will now be considered for approved leave.

Any parent wishing to take their child out of school during term time — irrespective of the circumstances — must put this request in writing to the Head Teacher. A formal framework is now in place for monitoring attendance and unauthorised absence.

Genuine medical appointments are exempt from this process, but we ask that parents provide a copy of the appointment letter, text, or email as clarification that the appointment is genuine.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

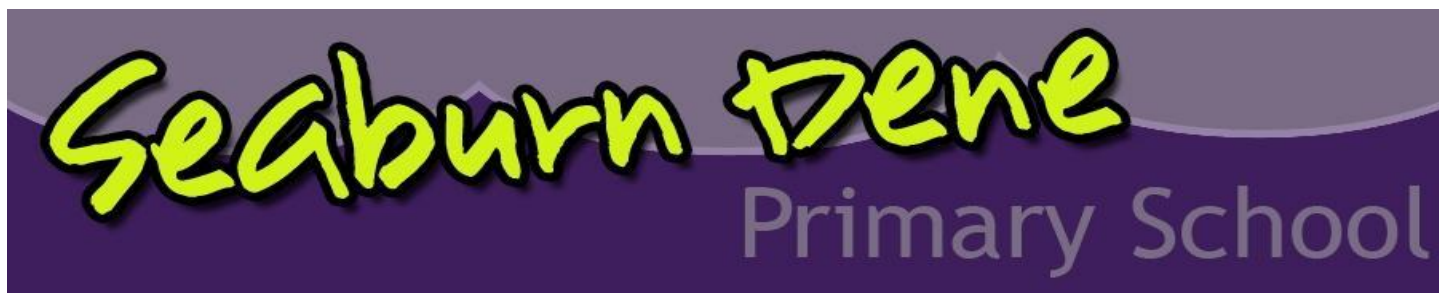
From September 2024, the rules around irregular attendance changes. As outlined by the Department for Education:

“All children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school, must attend that school regularly and punctually. It is the responsibility of families to ensure this.”

The definition of irregular absences includes:

- Holidays taken during term time





- Persistent patterns of absence that fall into the “unauthorised” category

This criteria is set by the Government and is beyond the school’s control.

You will generally be fined for a term-time holiday if your child misses 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 full school days) within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. However, please note that the specific number of days can vary between local authorities, and fines can sometimes be considered for shorter periods if there are multiple instances of absence.

Currently, the fine is:

- **£80 per parent, per child** if paid within 21 days
- Rising to **£160** if paid between 22–28 days

For more details, you can review the Local Authority’s Code of Conduct regarding the Fixed Penalty Notice process here:

👉 [Sunderland Local Code of Conduct PDF](#)

(This document is also available under the *Policy* link on our school website.)

### **Working Together**

Our aim is always to work in partnership with families to support excellent attendance and punctuality. By ensuring your child attends school regularly, you are giving them the very best chance to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support in this important matter.

Warm regards,

Mr John Howe  
Seaburn Dene Primary School

