CHAPELFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Respect, Honesty, Caring, Commitment

HEADTEACHER **Mrs A Reed**

09.10.2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

This letter has been shared with school by the Local Authority for your attention. If you have any questions regarding the new legislation outlined in this letter please speak to Mrs McLoughlin. As you will be aware the monitoring of attendance is a statutory duty school undertakes, all fines are issued by and paid to the Local Authority – not school. The school registers are monitored by the Local Authority and actions are taken in line with this monitoring.

Important Update Regarding School Attendance and Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

At Chapelfield Primary School, we are committed to working in partnership with families to promote excellent school attendance and ensure that every child has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

We would like to make you aware of an important update to the way that unauthorised absences, including term-time holidays, may be considered by the Local Authority.

Changes to Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave During Term Time

The Department for Education's statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, expects schools and local authorities to take a consistent approach to promoting attendance and addressing absence.

In line with this guidance and following revisions to Bury Council's Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from School, the Local Authority may now consider issuing a Penalty Notice before the national threshold is reached where there is a pattern of repeated unauthorised absence during term time.

This means that where a child is taken out of school for multiple unauthorised periods of leave during the same academic year, even where each individual absence is fewer than five school days, the cumulative impact of those absences may be considered when determining whether enforcement action is appropriate.

This may include holidays that are taken immediately before or after INSET days, Bank Holidays or Polling Days.

Schools can only authorise leave during term time in exceptional circumstances and parents are therefore strongly encouraged to avoid booking family holidays during school term time.

Why Attendance Matters

Regular school attendance is essential for a child's academic achievement, wellbeing and future opportunities.

Even short periods of absence can result in:

- Missed learning opportunities.
- Gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- Difficulties maintaining academic progress.
- Reduced opportunities to develop friendships, routines and positive learning habits.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school.

What Happens if an Unauthorised Holiday is Taken?

Where a child is taken out of school during term time without authorisation:

- The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The school will notify parents where leave has not been authorised.
- The Local Authority will consider the circumstances of the absence and any previous unauthorised leave recorded during the academic year.
- Where a pattern of repeated unauthorised leave is identified, the Local Authority may consider issuing a Penalty Notice, even where individual periods of absence are fewer than five school days.
- This means that multiple shorter periods of unauthorised leave, when considered cumulatively, may result in enforcement action.
- For example, two separate periods of four school days' unauthorised leave within the same academic year may be considered as a pattern of absence and could lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

- Repeated unauthorised absences linked to holidays taken immediately before or after INSET days, bank holidays or polling days may also be considered as part of this assessment.
- Enforcement action, including the issue of a Penalty Notice, may therefore be taken in accordance with Bury Council's Code of Conduct.

Working Together

Our priority remains to work positively with families and provide support wherever attendance concerns arise. We encourage parents and carers to speak to the school at the earliest opportunity if there are any barriers affecting their child's attendance so that appropriate support can be explored.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring that your child attends school regularly and benefits from every opportunity available to them. By working together, we can help all children achieve their best and enjoy a successful educational experience.

If you have any questions regarding this update or your child's attendance, please contact Mrs McLoughlin.

Yours sincerely,

A.Reed J.McLoughlin

Headteacher Family Support Officer