SEWELL PARK ACADEMY
Enriching minds, enabling success

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Headteacher: D. Day BSc
Deputy Head: M. Evans BSc MSc PhD

Dear Parents & Carers,

7th September 2021

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research (www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Sewell Park Academy our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '*Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.* ***The application must be made in advance*** *and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.* ***A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion'***.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks

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The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at Sewell Park Academy who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D. Day

Headteacher