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St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Re: School Attendance –

Date

Dear

As part of our school policy we monitor all pupils' school attendance on a regular basis. It has come to our attention that **X** attendance has fallen below 95%. This is the level at which a child is considered by the Department for Education to be 'Persistently Absent.' Their attendance has now dropped to **X%**.

I have enclosed a copy of **X's** attendance for your information. Repeated absences are likely to have a significant impact on their development, learning and achievement.

The Law is clear that it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of children in their care to make sure that they attend school. If the parents or guardians fail to ensure full and regular attendance, they can be prosecuted under the 1966 Education Act which could incur potential fines.

The school is not permitted to authorise absence for holidays. Where a pupil is absent for more than 10 sessions in any 10 week rolling period, the school may apply to the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty notice.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 if paid after this but within 28 days. If your child is further absent from school without authorisation within any 3-year period, you will be committing a further offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices for a second offence are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £160, payable within 28 days. Importantly, fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may also result in legal action. If you are prosecuted and attend court because your child has not been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Absence not authorised by the school may also result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Again, Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court, including legal costs. Money raised from fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

We clearly want to avoid this happening. Should your child be experiencing difficulties with attendance, you are welcome to contact the school for an appointment to discuss how we can help. We are available to support you with any worries or concerns regarding attendance or any other difficulties you may be experiencing.

Yours sincerely,

Mr T Moran

Headteacher