



Dear Parents / Carers

As of September 2013 there has been a change in the School Attendance Regulations. Where there used to be the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence of up to ten days for the purpose of a family holiday during term time, this has now been removed. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an **exceptional circumstance**. The annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

Applications will be looked at individually on merit and, in the case of an event that has to be booked, the request needs to be made prior to the booking. Factors taken into consideration by the Headteacher as to whether authorisation can be given will include:

- If it is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event.
- If it is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life.
- If the event cannot be organised outside of the school term.
- If the event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child.
- If taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school.
- If the child will not be disadvantaged by not being in school for the period of the event.
- The child's previous attendance history.
- The age of the child and their stage of education.
- The time of year (beginning of academic year, exam times etc).

If you consider that your request falls into this category, you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this letter. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Service will be informed. In this instance the Local Authority **may serve a Fixed Penalty Notice**.

There will always be exceptions, particularly where a child or family have been through a difficult or distressing time, please contact me directly in such a case.

Leave of absence taken during the school term is extremely disruptive for both pupils and teaching staff and we strongly recommend that it should be avoided. Children returning from any absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work and this poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Headteacher

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