

10th July 2013

Dear Parent

Throughout the year I am sometimes asked for special permission to allow pupils holiday leave during term time. With this in mind I would like to explain below recent changes to regulations regarding attendance.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations laid down by the Department of Education remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that:

“headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.” Department for Education, 15 April 2013. The guidance clearly outlines that affordability and a surprise holiday are not exceptional circumstances.

Therefore, at a recent meeting of the Governing Body it was decided, due to the new guidelines, that I would only be granting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and would no longer be authorising holidays in term time. As the recent amendments state, there may be ‘exceptional circumstances’ and it is entirely up to the Headteacher’s discretion how ‘exceptional’ is defined and viewed within their own school.

I understand that it is sometimes difficult and certainly more expensive to book vacations in school holiday time however, there are thirteen weeks of school holiday time available and we have an absolute priority to focus upon the learning and progress of your child.

If you would like to apply for leave of absence then you will need to complete a form, which you can obtain from the School Office, and return it to school. If your request is not granted and you still proceed with the leave of absence then it will be unauthorised absence and you may be liable to a penalty notice issued by the Local Authority.

Our attendance rate is still below the National level and from September any child who has an attendance rate below 90% during the school year I will be contacting you individually to discuss ways to improve your child’s attendance.

Yours sincerely

T.J. Eastwell
Headteacher