

Holidays Taken during Term Time

Dear Parents/Carers

28th November 2017

We are writing to express our concern about the escalating absence from school due to holidays taken during term time. Last year our attendance figure was 96.2%, the lowest for 3 years.

Whilst there will always be unavoidable illness when children need to stay at home, it is the unauthorised holiday taken during term time which not only has an impact on the child concerned but on the class as a whole. It is this impact on the other children and the teaching staff which we feel needs to be highlighted.

We are aware that some parents/carers take the view that work can be caught up and topics learnt once the child is back in school. This isn't really the case as the child will never again be in the classroom being taught a topic on an even keel with the other students. This is magnified if an absence is for a few days with other lessons being used to reinforce the learning.

A single week's absence results in a child missing 5 hours of English, 5 hours of Maths, 1 hour of Science as well as all current topic work. When several children are taken out of a class for unauthorised holidays the problem is further exacerbated. For example, in a 6 week period during the last academic year, a single class had 6 children absent due to holiday totaling 25 missed days. This in turn disrupted learning in class for many weeks, as the teacher spent time with these children at the detriment to others.

Teachers feel that they have no alternative other than to spend time helping a child to catch up after a holiday, however, this in turn reduces the time they have available to meet other children's needs. The responsibility for helping a child to 'catch up' after an unauthorised absence lies solely with the parent/carer and not the teaching staff.

A recent report, 'Creating a Culture' by Tom Bennett identifies that successful schools depend on highly consistent working practices and high levels of staff and parental commitment to the school's vision and strategies. Taking children out of school during term time communicates to the school, and more importantly to the child, that the rules do not apply to them.

Furthermore, we have reason to believe that some absences reported as illness or medical appointments are in fact being taken as days out. This is damaging not only to the child's education but to their moral welfare as they are being encouraged by their parent/carer to be dishonest. Therefore, if you intend to take your child out of school it is important for you and your child to be honest about the reasons for doing so.

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, school cannot authorise holiday during term time due the impact this has on the child and other children and staff within school. As parents ourselves we understand decisions regarding absence in term time can be extremely challenging for a family for any number of reasons but can we please ask that you support the welfare and learning of all children in school when making such decisions.

Thank you

Miss A King & Mrs A Whitaker

Parent Governors