



8th July 2016

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following the recent press coverage in relation to holiday absences in term time, I am writing to share the updated policy from our local schools' EiP partnership. I would also like to explain one particular point of exceptional circumstances, having sought clarification on this from the Local Authority.

You will find attached a copy of the attendance policy for our schools' partnership. There are no material changes to that of previous years. However, in light of recent speculation, I would draw your attention to the information on Fixed Penalty Notices. As required, we will continue to pass information on any qualifying absences to the Local Authority who are responsible for issuing the Fixed Penalty Notice. **Please note that it is the Local Authority who issue any Notices, and that we are required to pass information to them.** This only applies to children of statutory school age i.e. age 5 to 16. For other students, parents may apply for leave of absence at the discretion of the headteacher.

I would also like to draw your attention to the category Family Crisis (adoption; bereavement; additional medical needs) as we have sought further advice from the Local Authority on exceptions due to additional medical needs. This exemption can only be used if the absence due to additional medical needs is exceptional in terms of being a rare or unpredictable occurrence. Examples might be hospice care which does not fall under the category of Educated Elsewhere, or a one-off holiday provided by a charity to a child with a life-limiting condition on dates specified by the charity. As you can see, these will be rare occurrences. We cannot authorise a holiday in term time solely because a child has additional medical needs or special needs. This clarification will apply to all Leave of Absence requests made after the issue of this letter. I realise that schools may have applied this particular exception differently in the past but it is important that we are consistent and act on guidance from the Local Authority so that all pupils are treated equally.

If you do require a Leave of Absence form, please download one from our website or contact Maxine Nevitt for a paper copy. If you need further advice on whether a future absence might meet authorising criteria, please direct queries to Maxine who will explain whether it does/doesn't meet the exceptional qualifiers.

Many thanks in anticipation of your cooperation,

Jane Hughes

Headteacher



Head Teacher - Jane Hughes

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