LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME – new regulations

"Evidence shows that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically and are more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) when they leave school".

"If children are taken away for a two week family holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, they will have missed the equivalent of a year off school by the time they are sixteen".

"There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement". (Improving Attendance at School – Charlie Taylor pub. DfE 2012)

Warwickshire Secondary School pupils recorded 15492 half day sessions of absence due to holiday in Autumn Term 2012 alone. This disrupts the learning of all not just those who are away.

*Previous interpretations of the regulations where Head Teachers could grant pupils leave of absence of **up to 10** days for the purpose of a two week family holiday in term time has been interpreted by some parents as a right to an automatic two week term-time holiday. **This is not acceptable and the rules have been strengthened to prevent this happening in future.***

*For this reason the Government has brought in new guidance tightening taking time off in term-time. These new rules come into force on 1 September 2013. **Head Teachers are no longer permitted to authorise absence for holidays taken during term time. They are permitted to grant leave only in exceptional circumstances.** If you think you have exceptional circumstances please talk to us without delay and before arrangements are entered into or money committed.*

If exceptional circumstances are accepted the Head Teacher will determine how much absence will be authorised.

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We understand that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an Exceptional Circumstance.

Parents please note:

Leave which is taken for the following reasons **will not be** authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

We greatly appreciate parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. We are committed to working in partnership with you to enable your child to reach their academic targets and to support their social development and for this to happen we need to keep individual attendance as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- More than 30 days absence = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week. If a child's attendance equates to 80% over their time in secondary school they will miss more than a full year of education.

Be aware: Holidays which are unauthorised should not be taken. If they are taken, parents are in breach of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school full time and may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution through the courts.

Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.