



Friday 19th July 2013

Dear Parents

Change in the law regarding absence from school during term time

The Department for Education has recently changed the regulations relating to the discretionary powers granted to schools allowing them to authorise absences during term time. Until now the school has had the discretion to grant up to ten school days leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday in "special circumstances". With effect from 1st September 2013 the law has been amended so that **schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances are not defined in law but the following may be considered:

- Religious observance
- Educated off-site
- Attending interview (e.g. change of school, etc.)
- Medical or emergency dental appointment
- Approved sporting activity
- Weddings - where the date set is not within your control
- Funeral
- Family holiday only where the parent/carer's employer has written to the school to explain that the holiday/leave cannot be taken at any other time of the year.

As a consequence of the new regulations the school will not authorise an absence for a family holiday other than as described above. Please note that this also includes days before the end of term/half-term to start a holiday or 'over-run' days at the start of a new term/half-term.

Every application for absence will be assessed individually and consideration will include the child's overall attendance record. For attendance at a wedding or funeral consideration will be given to **reasonable** travelling time/arrangements to attend (depending on the location) in addition to the day of the event. All requests for absence must be submitted a minimum of two weeks before the absence is required except in an emergency. If the absence is not authorised and your child is not in school on the days for which absence was requested you may be liable to a fine or prosecution.

The regulations regarding the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) in relation to unauthorised absences have also been amended by the same legislation. Under the amended regulations the amount of the Fixed Penalty Notice will be £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid within 28 days.

All these changes are effective from 1st September 2013.

R. Gouws
Head teacher