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Headteacher: Mrs S Barry

16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

## **Attendance and Requests for Leave of Absence from School**

Thank you to everyone who arrived back at school in time for the first day of term. Our attendance has improved tremendously, and I was pleased to show the Educational Welfare Officer that, in some classes, all children had attendances of more than 95%. Thank you for making the difference to your child's education. We must remember that all children have a right to an education which is enshrined in law.

However, there continues to be some children for whom attendance at school has dropped considerably. We regularly review attendance across the school and it has become clear that some children are frequently missing days, especially at the beginning and end of term, or after a weekend, and there are still many requests for annual leave in term time.

We need to work with parents to deal with any issues regarding a child attending school. If your child is often ill, or has a medical condition, we must work together with the support of your doctor to ensure that your child does not miss any more education than is necessary. If siblings are well, they must be in school – children should not be kept off school just because their brother or sister is unwell. We, as a school, can help if there are problems getting a child to school. Obviously, if a child is sick, we do not want to spread germs, but if you are uncertain, give the office a call to check if the child is still contagious.

From September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, schools were prohibited from 'granting leave of absence, except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor (head teacher) considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.' Since any request for term time absence should only be in **exceptional circumstances**, we have decided to withdraw the 'Request for Term Time Absence' forms. Any parent wishing to request term time absence, should write a letter explaining why the request is exceptional, together with any supporting documentation in the case of illness/ medical appointments. Any unauthorised absences may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer to be considered for a Fixed Penalty Notice. All term dates are clearly published on our website.

### **Exceptional Circumstances does NOT include:**

- Cheap holiday / flight costs
- Getting personal paperwork, passports, visas etc. updated (this should be planned into holiday periods)
- Visiting relatives (this should be planned into holiday periods)
- Forgetting when the term begins / ends

### **Exceptional Circumstances MAY include:**

- Emergency service / Forces personnel with proof of enforced holiday period
- One transcontinental leave request per Key Stage for a very significant extended family event, including seeing an elderly / seriously ill relative or attending a close family funeral

Remember, a week is a long time for a child in a school. Much learning can be lost, and friendship groups can change. Thank you again to all parents for your continued support. I know you understand and value your child's education.

**Sandra Barry**  
Head teacher