

Attendance

With attendance targets in school becoming an increasing issue, the Government and Local Authority are taking a much stronger stand on poor levels of attendance, which does include holidays in term time!

Authorised Absences

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as 'authorised absences'. If your child is ill then we are **not** suggesting that you send them to school. Please keep them at home until they are well again.

Unauthorised Absences

When children are absent from school for reasons that are not permitted by law, this is an unauthorised absence. Some of these reasons are;

- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- It is your child's birthday
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Waiting on a delivery/repair man
- Unauthorised holidays
- Where there is no explanation or unsatisfactory explanation.

Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the local authority. The Education Social Work and Attendance Service may contact you and consider taking legal action against you about your child's unauthorised absences.

Legal note

"Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular and full time attendance at school, of registered pupils (section 7 Education Act 1996). Failure to do so is an offence. In some cases, parents are prosecuted or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue". Education Act 1996.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are concerned about the amount of time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. Government guidance states that "Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday during term time" and "Schools can only agree to absence for a family holiday if they believe there are special circumstances that warrant it".

Any absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Headteacher and we have been clearly told by the Government that the fact that a holiday is cheaper during term time is NOT considered to be 'special circumstances'.

Therefore following guidance from the Local Authority and falling in line with other schools in Dorset and our pyramid of schools **no holidays** will be authorised from January 2011, unless it is considered to be due to "special circumstances". Parents may request up to 10 days leave of absence due to special circumstances, however if this is not approved by the headteacher and parents decide to take their child/children out of school anyway, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

We value your support in this matter to help us maintain high standards and to make every day count.