# Otterton C of E Primary School

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Dear Parents,

**Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time.**

At Otterton C of E Primary School we want the best for your child as we are sure you do too. Children who miss school may fall behind in their work and young children can find it very hard to get back into their friendship groups after a period of absence.

As of September 2013, an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force and greater clarity was introduced to the issue of schools authorising absence requests. These changes reinforced the Government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absences by the school in exceptional circumstances.

A family holiday is not normally considered by the Government to be an 'exceptional circumstance' and therefore will not be authorised by this school.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, then Parental Responsibility Measures could be instigated. This could mean receiving any of the following;

- A Penalty Notice (assuming one has not been issued in the past 2 years)
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

1. Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
2. Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that they child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example- a family holiday). Only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when school has been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
3. A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.
4. A child is ill for 5 or more consecutive days without medical evidence.

This school will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated. If a

previous Penalty Notice has been issued within the past 2 years then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Court.

Whilst you may consider that a holiday will be educational and refusal of a leave request disappointing, your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive. Children returning from a term time holiday are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement, not only of your child but of other students in the class. This is something we ***all*** have a responsibility to avoid.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

P Halford

Yours Sincerely

Peter Halford
Executive Academy Head.

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