

Our ref CH/BH

16 July 2013

Dear Parent/Carer

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Due to recent amendments (April 2013) that have been made to the Department for Education's Pupil Registration Regulations to address attendance issues, it has been made clear to headteachers that they **should not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances"**. The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. It is a common misconception that pupils are allowed to take up to ten days holiday in term time during any academic year.

As a result of the revised regulations, the governors at Dryden and Hill Top Federation have agreed to amend our current practice for September 2013 and adopt clear protocols for leave of absence during term time. This particularly relates to holidays in term time. Parents will need to complete a request for permission for leave of absence from school during term time, giving specific reasons why they feel there are exceptional circumstances.

If you do decide to apply for leave of absence it is important to avoid:

1. The beginning of terms or school years.
2. Time during the first year at school.
3. Periods close to or during examinations/course work deadlines.
4. Transition points such as preparation for leaving school.

Requests will be considered on an individual basis taking into account your child's special education needs, attendance and progress. In response to a leave of absence request you will receive a response letter stating whether this leave of absence has been authorised or not.

If parents/carers, contrary to what the school has said, still decide to take their child out of school for a holiday then the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. This can lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Service and the possible issue of a 'fixed penalty notice' amounting to £60 per child per parent/carers which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 28 days. These have been introduced as part of the government's drive to improve attendance.

The absence of pupils seriously disrupts the continuity of their learning. They miss the teaching provided on the days they are away. There is a risk of absence affecting their progress which we must seek to avoid. A child who has 10 days holiday in term time each year of his/her school life will miss 24 weeks (120 days) of his/her school education. This

is in addition to unavoidable absence linked to circumstances such as illness. Pupils who attend school on a regular basis and are offered access to high quality teaching and learning will usually leave school with good progress.

We realise that this is a change in practice but we are following the new legislation and acting in line with other schools in the local authority. I hope you will support our continued efforts to raise attendance and progress.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Becky Harrison
Executive Headteacher