



Mrs E S Viner, BSc, PGCE, NPQH
Head Teacher

www.denmead-jun.hants.sch.uk

Friday 18th October 2019

Dear parents and carers,

Term time Holiday Requests

As we approach the first half term holiday, I thought it would be helpful to clarify the school's position around requests for absence from school. Every child is expected to come to school every day that they are well enough to do so. The only time a child's absence can be legally authorised is when they are ill, or they have a medical appointment.

Parents and carers may apply to the Head Teacher for a 'leave of absence' for other exceptional circumstances, and it is the Head Teacher's responsibility to decide whether these will be authorised or not. The Head Teacher **CANNOT** authorise absence for family holidays. There are 13 weeks of school holiday during which family holidays can be taken, and family events such as weddings can be organised. Whilst we understand that for financial reasons families may wish to take their children out of school at other times, holidays cannot be lawfully authorised.

Any unauthorised absence of 10 or more sessions (i.e. 5 days) will lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. This is a legal duty placed upon Head Teachers and the school receives none of the monies from any resulting fine, despite the additional work load on the school to undertake this. If the fine is not paid, it is the Hampshire Attendance Legal Panel (ALP) who will decide whether to take further action, which could include a court appearance.

We have always tried to treat each application for leave of absence sympathetically, and to understand the pressures of family life. However, I am aware that there are some families who have not always been honest about the reason for their child's absence (i.e. claiming the child is sick, when in fact on holiday) which has led to other families feeling they have not been treated fairly.

The school is under no obligation to accept a claim that the child was ill when, for example, evidence on social media or from other sources, (e.g. overseas mobile ring tones when the school chases the absence; class mates or others informing the school) make it clear that the family was in fact on holiday, or having a day off.

I know that the vast majority of families are accepting of the legal position the school finds itself in, and also recognise the importance of good attendance for the learning and social skills of the children.

If you have any further questions about attendance or requests for absence, then please do come and speak to me.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Viner,
Head Teacher

