

## SCHOOL ABSENCES

**ABSENCES DURING THE TERM HOLIDAYS** Current legislation states that children should not be taken on holiday during the school term. As a result of this we do not authorise leave.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE** Leave of absence can be granted only in exceptional circumstances. These may include:

- i. Genuine illness of the pupil
- ii. Hospital, dental or doctor's appointment for the pupil
- iii. Bereavement
- iv. Major religious observances
- v. Visits to a new school
- vi. External exams or educational assessments
- vii. Events related to the Armed Forces, such as welcoming returning service personnel from long postings abroad.

Requests for absence should be made by letter or email. Please give full details of the reason for the request to allow us to give it proper consideration.

**UNAPPROVED ABSENCES** Unapproved absences are marked as 'unauthorised' and are recorded on a child's record of attendance. They are also reported to West Sussex Local Authority and 'persistent absentees' identified in school data.

**FIXED PENALTY NOTICE** The 2006 regulations on attendance permit West Sussex Local Authority to issue parents with a fine called a fixed penalty notice. This occurs when a Headteacher has not authorised a request for absence, but it has occurred anyway, and where there have been ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a tenweek period. (Please note that a morning and an afternoon constitute two separate sessions.) Parents who have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school in term time may also be issued with a fixed penalty notice. Fixed penalty notices can also be issued for persistent lateness where your child arrives at school after 9.00am. The cost of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days, thereafter the local authority will commence prosecution.

**IMPACT OF ABSENCES** We thank parents for supporting their children's attendance by avoiding holidays in term-time. Absences affect not only the children who are off but those who remain in the class as attention is shifted from them when those who have missed teaching need extra support to enable them to study with the class.

Absences are graded in school reports:

Red	cause for concern	85% and below
Amber	not up to required standard	85.1% to 94.9%
Green	highly satisfactory	95% and above

80% attendance works out at 1 day off per week – a full year over 5 years! The combination of a holiday and unforeseen illness can rapidly add up and impact hugely on learning.

**ATTENDANCE CERTIFICATES** **We are proud of all children who have 100% attendance and reward this with certificates, shared in a celebration assembly each term, as well as at the end of the year.**