



Hunnyhill Primary School

Forest Road, Newport, Isle of Wight. PO30 5SH
(01983) 522506

29th September 2022

Dear Parents

Despite the recent High Court ruling it would appear that there is still some confusion around holidays in term time.

The school will only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. The National Association of Headteachers state that the fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the head teacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each request.

In summary:

- If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event. Therefore, whilst we are of course sympathetic to the cost implications, holidays during term-time are **not** considered 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service only, not for extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- We will take into account the needs of the families of service personnel if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or a crisis. These should be discussed in person with the Head Teacher.
- The pupil's record of attendance will be taken into account when making absence-related decisions- not just the current academic year.

To clarify, parents have a Statutory Duty to send their children to school on every day that the school is open to pupils. Holidays should not be taken in term-time as it is proven that they have a detrimental effect on your child's education.

As a school, we are monitored in terms of our overall attendance and the Whole School target has been set at 96.00%

In order to assist parents and to further clarify the school's position, the Governing Board and Senior Leaders at Hunnyhill have determined the following rules apply:

If a parent chooses to remove their child/ren from school without authorisation then the school will refer for a fixed penalty notice to be issued.

It is absolutely vital that term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Head teachers will rightly prioritise attendance.

I'm sure you will join with myself and our Governing Board to work together to ensure that the number of unauthorised absences are reduced and that all children receive the very best education by attending school regularly.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Lisa Steedman
Headteacher