



27th June 2013

Dear Parents

Request for Leave of Absence in Term Time: Revised National Arrangements

I write to inform you of changes that the government is introducing to any request for family holidays during term time from September 2013. The government has decided that schools will no longer be able to authorise family holidays during term time except for limited cases with 'exceptional circumstances'. (If parents do take their child on holiday during term time it will be marked as an unauthorised absence, the Local Education Authority maybe informed and a Penalty Notice issued).

In 'exceptional cases' parents can request in advance to take a family holiday and the decision will be made by the Headteacher who will take into account the 'special circumstances' e.g. returning parent from tour of duty with the armed forces etc.

In view of the changes, I would like to take this opportunity to summarise for parents the schools policy on term time holidays, which is based on government legislation:

- The law says that from September 2013 parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time.
- In exceptional circumstances a request for absence must be made 4 weeks in advance of the absence.
- If absence is not authorised and the student goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued, which means a parent may be fined by the Education Welfare Service.

Chatsmore Catholic High School, together with the Local Authority, believes that attendance is vital. It is because of the link between attendance and attainment that the government has placed a priority on reducing all forms of absence and has introduced Penalty Notice fines to parents whose children are absent without the school's authorisation. Research suggests that low attendance has a detrimental impact on achievement.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Madden
Headteacher