Dear Parent/Guardian

FAMILY HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Time lost by children and young people due to family holidays taken in term time can be disruptive to their education. In addition, I am concerned that there could be some misunderstanding of the law in relation to absence from school because of holidays taken during term time.

We advise that wherever possible, absence from school should be avoided as it can have a serious effect on your child’s educational progress, and can create difficulties for them on their return to school, particularly if they are joining a new school or class. If, after serious consideration of this, you still propose to take your child away from school for a holiday, it is important to note that only the Headteacher can authorise that absence. Parents/Guardians cannot authorise the absence themselves.

Whenever possible therefore we would ask that family holidays should be arranged to take place during school holidays. Schools do have discretion to grant up to 10 days leave during term time, but only in exceptional circumstances doing so they will consider your child’s situation carefully.

In all cases it is best to have a discussion with the Headteacher in order to look at the issues as they affect your child, before any decision to book a holiday during term time is made.

Where a child is looked after by the Local Authority, only the Local Authority can seek the agreement of the Headteacher to a term time holiday. Our policy is to seek such agreement only in exceptional circumstances. If you are a foster carer, please discuss your holiday plans with the child’s Social Worker who will forward the request to the appropriate decision maker.

We have drafted a policy document to clarify existing policy for staff and carers.

Where a family holiday during term time is agreed to be unavoidable, it is vital that it does not coincide with examinations or other important tests that your child has to take.

The dates of examinations in 2012/13 are:

- **Key Stage 2 SATs**: May – contact school for exact dates
- **GCSE**: November/ May/June – contact school for exact dates
- **‘A’ and ‘AS’**: Throughout January, May and June – contact School for exact dates

Many people are working very hard to help your child to succeed. I trust you will support us in this matter, in partnership with your child’s school.

Yours sincerely

Julia Morrison
Corporate Director – Children’s Services

Together we can achieve the very best for every child, young person and their family in Cumbria

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