

# Littledean Church of England Primary School

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*People with time for Children*

13<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Dear Parents

As your Governing Body, we continually review attendance across the school against nationally set expectations and our own targets. At our last Full Governing Body meeting, we were informed that an unusually large number of holiday requests have been submitted during this academic year. Over the year there have been 30 separate holiday requests, these have resulted in 258 sessions of school being lost.

We are concerned about this for two reasons. Firstly, pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning which can make it difficult for them to progress through the curriculum at the rate at which they need to. This can also have an impact on the rest of the class as school staff then need to adapt the series of lessons in order to help the pupil catch up with missed learning in order to move forward. Secondly, attendance figures are reviewed by Ofsted, and declining attendance will lead to pressure on our Ofsted rating which could significantly impact the success of the school going forward.

Whilst we fully understand the financial pressures on many families and the significant savings that can result from booking family holidays during term time, we would urge you to avoid making such bookings. The law states that parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and have to apply for permission in advance. Such permission is granted in accordance with arrangements made by the governing body and in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance and department advice.

When an application is made for an authorised absence during term time the Head Teacher will give consideration to the following:

- \* The nature of the proposed absence/is this a truly exceptional circumstance?
- \* The age of the child.
- \* The timing of the absence.
- \* The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years.

Some examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances are:

- \* To have a short absence to attend a family wedding; or to attend a special family reunion, or to attend a special religious/cultural festival.
- \* If a parent, due to the nature of their work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays. This would need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer.

Head teacher: Mrs Hayley McGoldrick

Please note: to have a week's holiday during school time because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Any holidays that are taken during term time, which have not been previously agreed by the Head Teacher will be marked as unauthorised and appropriate action taken following government/Local Authority guidelines. This could result in a warning letter being issued or potentially a penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

We want to work with our families to promote good attendance for all of pupils to ensure that they are in school regularly in order to make the most of the educational opportunities that are available to them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Barnsley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Barnsley  
Chair of Governors