



Gorsemoor Primary School

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July 2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you are probably aware by now, legislation in regard to term time holidays and unauthorised absences has changed over the last 18 months. As an authority, Staffordshire has published guidelines which Headteachers are obliged to follow and it is my duty to now inform you, that as of 23rd February 2015, these guidelines have been modified.

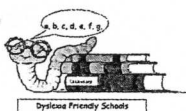
As before, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence anymore during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. This is the law. An annual family holiday or weekend away is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, regardless of parents work commitments, holiday entitlement restrictions or the financial benefits of going away in term time. As much as we sympathise and fully understand all the restrictions families face in these areas, I cannot authorise leave on these grounds.

The only exception to this is if there are very specific circumstances that would require a child (or children) to be absent for a short period of time.

As a result of this, schools no longer hold holiday request forms. Here at Gorsemoor, we have "leave of absence" forms which we ask parents to fill in.

Parents can now be fined for taking their children away from school and the criteria for issuing the fines have changed. These fines are classed as "Fixed Penalty Notices" and can be issued by the local authority when non-attendance at school is unauthorised. Circumstances when they can be issued now include the following:

- At least 10 school days in total are lost during the current and previous terms. These do not have to be consecutive days.
- If there is an unauthorised absence of 5 days (or more) for holiday purposes regardless of a child's previous attendance. This is the biggest change as schools used to only take this into account if attendance was below 87% as well.



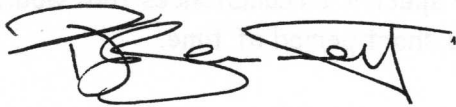
- If there is an unauthorised absence of just 1 day (or more) for holiday purposes **and** there is other unauthorised absences in the previous 12 calendar months which add up to 5 days or more of unauthorised absence.
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

All absences are monitored by the school's EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and any action that is taken will be triggered by their monitoring of school registers. The school does not issue the fine nor does the school profit from any monies received by the local authority as a result of fines issued.

Parents should also now be aware that fixed penalty notices can now be issued more than once in a school year.

Please be aware that the school is duty bound by law to adhere to these changes. We will continue to support families who need to remove their children from school for short periods of time for genuine family emergencies.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. S. S.', written in a cursive style.