

ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL



'Helping **everyone** achieve their best'



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Headteacher: Mr G Moore

'It Really Does Matter'

18th September 2023

Leave of Absence/Holiday Requests

Dear Parents/Carers,

I feel that I needed to write this letter to explain the position regarding the above. In my 13 years as Headteacher, the past 12 months has seen the highest number of holiday requests ever.

Being totally honest (and I have previously explained this on more than one occasion), this is definitely the element of my job which I like the least (apart from Ofsted inspections that is).

I see a large part of my role as forming and developing relationships with the Abbotswood families. Thus, giving penalty notices to these same people does not sit comfortably with me. Yet, as a Headteacher, I am duty bound to report such absences to the local authorities.

To give a bit of background:

- These strict rules on unauthorised holidays were introduced by the Government in 2013. Previously, Headteachers were allowed to grant up to 10 days of authorised absence.
- Penalty notices are issued if your child is absent (unauthorised) for 10 or more half day sessions.
- If a fine is raised, then each responsible parent will be fined £60 per child, per week of absence.
- **The school DOES NOT keep any of the money from the fines although our school admin team has to carry out all of the related administration.**
- Only one day will be authorised for weddings although I may authorise 2 days in exceptional circumstances.
- There have been a number of instances where we have been notified that a child is sick and when they return to school, the child tells us that they have been on holiday. Please be honest as this places your child in a very difficult position.

As somebody who has to take all of their holidays out of term time, I do appreciate and experience first-hand, the huge price hikes that holiday companies put in place during school holidays. Furthermore, I am also aware that many families are struggling financially during these tough times. I can only say that I wish this situation was different.

Lastly, like you, I want the best for your children and for them to get on well in life. The research is clear: children who attend school regularly are able to learn more, flourish better socially and mentally, and importantly, are better at making and keeping friendships; a vital part of growing up.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Glenn Moore
Headteacher