

ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL



'Helping **everyone** achieve their best'

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Headteacher: Mr G Moore

'It Really Does Matter'

22nd September 2022

Leave of Absence/Holiday Requests

Dear Parents/Carers,

I felt that I needed to write this letter as the school is currently inundated with 'Holiday' and 'Leave of Absence' applications. Having been head at Abbotswood for 9 years, this term has seen a huge increase in the number of such requests.

Being totally honest (and I have explained this to some of you in the past), this is the element of my job which I like the least. I see a large part of my role as developing relationships with the Abbotswood families so giving penalty notices to these same people does not sit well with me. Yet, as a Headteacher, I am duty bound to report such absences to the local authority.

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 the money from fines although our school office has to carry out all of the related administration.
- Only one day will be authorised for weddings.

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

Note: I also attach a letter which has been constructed by all of the local cluster schools.