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September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

## School Attendance

As you are probably aware, Government guidelines, in place for several years now, have put schools under increasing pressure to cut down on absences, both authorised and unauthorised. This is because educational research shows a clear link between a high level of attendance and good academic results.

The guidelines emphasise that the only valid reason for an authorised absence is either sickness or an unavoidable medical appointment. Please note that routine dental appointments, should be organised outside of school time whenever possible.

The court battle between Jon Platt and the Isle of Wight Council, regarding a fine imposed on him for taking his children on holiday during term time, have been highly publicised in the media. However, as you may be aware, The Supreme Court overturned an earlier decision in favour of Mr Platt in April of 2017:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/apr/06/supreme-court-upholds-ban-on-term-time-holidays-jon-platt-unauthorised-break>.

In response to this decision, Cheshire West and Chester Council will be resuming the issuing of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised leave of absence, i.e. absence resulting from family holidays, from September 2017.

Headteachers have been advised that **only in exceptional circumstances** can leave of absence in term time be authorised. The school's holiday pattern allocates twelve weeks in every year when children are not in school and it is expected that this provides sufficient time, under normal circumstances, for parents to plan holidays.

It is important for parents to realise that if a pupil has ten consecutive sessions or five consecutive days of unauthorised leave of absence in a school year, then the Education Welfare Service may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice which will result in a fine. We do not want to go down this route and therefore we would ask parents to adhere to the following procedure:

Contact the school **before** booking any holidays in term time to discuss any exceptional circumstances. A 'request for leave of absence' form can be downloaded from the Parents section of the website under 'holiday dates' and should be completed as far in advance as possible but at least 4 weeks before the planned absence. A paper copy can be requested by your child from Student Services. Please provide as much information as possible on this form to enable us to ascertain if the circumstances are to be considered exceptional. Please note that you may be contacted to provide further information to support your application.

The school will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. You will be advised in writing of this decision.

If a parent decides to go ahead with the absence, even if the school has not agreed that it can be authorised, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

I hope this clarifies the stance of the school and Local Authority and will hopefully enable the disappointment of a declined request for absence to be avoided.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Warburton', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**S Warburton (Mrs)**  
Deputy Head Teacher