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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. Attendance of 90% over 5 years results in 475 missed lessons which will have a significant impact on learning and progress.

The guidelines emphasise that the only valid reason for an authorised absence is either sickness or an unavoidable medical appointment. Unavoidable would usually be a hospital appointment when it is not possible to request a specific time outside the school day.

Headteachers have been advised that **only in exceptional circumstances** can holidays in term time be authorised. The court battle between Jon Platt and the Isle of Wight Council regarding a fine imposed 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 last year: <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 resumed the issuing of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absence as a result of family holidays from September 2017.

It is important for parents to realise that if a pupil has ten days unauthorised absence for a holiday during term time, then the Education Welfare Service will 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 whether it could be considered by school as exceptional circumstances.
- The school will decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.
- If a parent decides to go ahead, even if the school has not agreed, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

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 for parents to plan holidays.

Please also be aware that if your child's attendance falls below 90%, you may be asked for evidence to justify any further absence before it is authorised and may be invited into school to discuss how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.

Yours faithfully

S Warburton (Mrs)
Deputy Head Teacher