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Dear Parents and Carers

Following many statements regarding school attendance by the Secretary of State, Mr Gove, the Government is now introducing some significant changes to attendance regulations for students at school as from this September, some of which you need to be aware.

The most important of these is in relation to term-time family holidays. Below is a quotation directly from the Department for Education Circular:

*'Amendments to the 2006 regulations **remove** references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers **may not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.'*

I draw your attention particularly to the second sentence of this paragraph. Clearly there are many situations which may constitute exceptional circumstances, but as a generality I interpret 'exceptional' in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about any individual request, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

May I therefore ask that you respect these new regulations under which we must now work, and that if you do need to take your child out of school during term time, you make very clear in your request how the circumstances are exceptional. If this is not clear then under the new legislation, I will not be allowed to grant leave.

In addition to this new legislation there are also new regulations coming in from September in which the imposition of penalty fines for parents and carers taking children out of school in unauthorised circumstances will now be imposed more strictly by the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely

ML Clarke
Headteacher

